

Race and Ethnicity in Anglo-Saxon Literature



Stephen J. Harris

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Series Editor Foreword

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Francis G.Gentry

ad patres meos
T.Frank Harris
and
Allen J.Frantzen

The ultimate foundation of a free society is the binding tie of cohesive sentiment. Such a sentiment is fostered by all those agencies of the mind and spirit which may serve to gather up the traditions of a people, transmit them from generation to generation, and thereby create the continuity of a treasured common life which constitutes a civilization.

—Justice Felix Frankfurter,
Minersville School District v. Gobitis,
310 US. 586 (1940)

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

—Isaiah 10:5–6

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Amherst, MA

Feast of St. Benedict Biscop, 2003

Abbreviations and Short Titles

<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
<i>ASPR</i>	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records
<i>CCSL</i>	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
<i>CSASE</i>	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
<i>CSEL</i>	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
EETS	Early English Text Society
Gneuss	Helmut Gneuss, <i>Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts</i> (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001)
<i>HE</i>	Bede, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Auct. ant.	Auctores Antiquissimi
Epp.	Epistolae Carolini Aevi
SS	Scriptores
SS rer. Germ	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum
SS rer. Merov.	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
<i>PL</i>	Patrologia Latina

CHAPTER ONE

Voices of Race

Early in the eleventh century, an otherwise unknown Anglo-Saxon man named Edward took to cutting his hair in the Norman fashion. He shaved the back half of his head and let dirty, long hair cover his face. His brother, thoroughly disgusted with Edward's new hairstyle, wrote him an angry letter, which has been preserved. "You despise your race and your ancestors," he seethed, "since in insult to them you dress [your hair] in Danish fashion with bared neck and blinded eyes He will be accursed who follows heathen practices in life and dishonours his own race."¹ Edward, although born an Anglo-Saxon, identified himself materially as a Norman, who in turn identified themselves (in part through a common hairstyle) with Scandinavian origins. Some Anglo-Saxons wound their hair round with gold, some shaved it off completely, some wore a tonsure—but all adopted material marks of identity which may or may not have reflected biological ties. Anglo-Saxons recognized a diversity of communities, but to each was allotted an ethnic identity that explained how one was bound to others. Ethnic identity also defined an audience for one's literary voice. The world comprised certain ethnic currents, and the literary culture in which early medieval authors took part, however geographically broad, was intimately tied to their ethnicity. From the time of the Venerable Bede in the late seventh and early eighth centuries to the time of Æthelred II, the Unready, Anglo-Saxon England was a complex and shifting matrix of race and ethnicity.² The metaphoric and sometimes material borders between racial and ethnic communities changed over the course of its five hundred years. Alfred's world had a different ethnic shape than did the worlds of Bede, Wulfstan, and the Anglo-Normans. Their respective literary traditions were immediately subtended by ethnic boundaries, as ours tend to be subtended by national ones. Current archaeological work is codifying the mercurial ethnicities of Anglo-Saxon England, but my argument in this book is that ethnicity is also a narrative phenomenon. It is proposed in stories that describe allegiance, difference, and origins. In the literature that helps to define the communities we popularly call English, varying degrees of allegiance and duty are constantly negotiated—these negotiations are operative in no small way in the felt tensions

of Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry.³ In fact, a sense of ethnicity defines the scope of English literature today.

Today, unexamined definitions of an Anglo-Saxon race have tremendous force on what we class as Western literary tradition. Behind the designation “Old English literature,” for example, lie powerful assumptions about principles of literary organization and criticism. This book aims to ask after one of those principles as it applies specifically to Old English literature: ethnicity. Referring to an age before nationalism, the “English” of “Old English literature” is an adjective which, by reducing the past to a single word, lends an uneasy sense of continuity to an ancient and varied body of texts. Systems of literary organization tend to begin with the present, and then posit origins according to contemporary national or ethnic divisions. To understand English literature, we often begin with England now, and then work our way backwards. As a result, when national and ethnic boundaries change, the historical origins of English literature seem strangely to change as well. David Wallace, in his recent preface to the new *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, introduces a “radically innovative” set of editorial practices in response to a new “concept of ‘Great Britain’ [that] is...losing its power to cohere and constrain disparate regional cultures.” Wallace rejects Old English as an origin of English literature, and begins at 1066, equally compelled by origins, just not Anglo-Saxon or communal ones.⁴ If the study of early English literature is the study of an ethnically defined body of texts, then how does a nation’s ethnic diversity *today* force a change in both our categories of evidence and our judgments of Anglo-Saxon aesthetics? To what degree, for example, ought we now to recognize cultural continuity with the Old English poetic corpus?⁵ Do current assumptions of an impolitic cultural unity condemn Old English poetry as politically *passé*? In short, what makes Old English literature *English*, and is that designation subject to the caprices and exclusion of political fashion?

Models of race and ethnicity often control the logic of cultural inheritance, historical continuity, national history, literary history, social diversity, political progress, institutional change, and artistic development.⁶ As a point of literary and linguistic origins, Old English has been considered an introduction to the long narrative of the progress of English and American literature. Old English has been classed as a seed, a rude beginning, the essence of Germanic spirit, a reflection of primitive democracy, a modified species of archaic oral poetry, and a distinctly racial literature.⁷ Most often, it is described as a beginning, as an origin point. As such, it is tied to a narrative of progress and of race. Systems of racial classification have marked our understanding of Old English literature. As Wallace demonstrates, one of the more recent systems of racial classification—diverse ethnicity and constructed identity—provides a new set of questions and a new literary origin to which the past is asked to succumb. Ethnicity today is sufficiently vague a category that to distinguish it from complementary phenomena such as

nationalism and regionalism is largely a matter of divination.⁸ But models of ethnicity, apparent in early medieval texts, provided a structure within which both the past of a people and its singing voice were expressed. Scriptural models of race, articulated by literate Anglo-Saxons, obtained well into the twentieth century, and continue in modified form to shape the way some contemporary critics hear the voice of race in literature. Coextensive, then, with any study of the limits of English literature is a study of an English race. This in turn entails unraveling a set of tightly wound themes, including ethnicity (Whose literature are we looking at?), genre (Is genre universal or defined by each community?), and the categorization of stories in the larger forensic enterprise (Is this fiction or history or theology or...?).

The importance of racial models to literary categorization cannot be overstated. Wallace implies that the principles by which texts are selected and described do not serve to recover those texts in their native habitat, but serve primarily to provide them with current social meaning.⁹ Yet why should today's racial models account better for a selection of texts than models we can pry, however incompletely, from medieval records? A model of classification is accurate only to the degree that, and insofar as, it reasonably accounts for more objects than, or better accounts for the same objects as, a competing model. A popular model today among literary critics is the model of origins or genealogy.¹⁰ Searching for "origins" or an "original," one selects a set of older texts to demonstrate, on behalf of a current work, anterior resemblance. Origins offer the authority of antiquity to any given object—for example, to a word (etymology), to a person (genealogy), or to an event or institution (tradition).¹¹ But the path backwards is often racially constrained. Literary origins frequently rely upon a biological model of ethnicity or race, which reduces cultural variety to a categorical singularity. As a road seems to narrow in the distance, so does a vast number of texts diminish over time to a socially, ethnically, or nationally inflected principle of literary selection. Texts that may have been miles apart thematically or generically appear today to cluster closely together. A racial model of literary origins is nothing new. As I hope to show, the coincidence of race and text is evident not only in a nineteenth-century racializing of language families, but also in early Christian discussions of Babel. This coincidence confesses today, as it did in the eighth century, that literature is somehow bounded by race.

As others before me have suggested, the invention of English literature resulted in Anglo-Saxon literature, and not the other way around. Allen J. Frantzen writes further that Anglo-Saxon studies might be conceived of "as the cause of 'Anglo-Saxon England.'"¹² With this caution before me, I do not try to transcend critical discourse to discover some *actual* Anglo-Saxon literature that can be distinguished in and of itself. In this vein, I suppose, and not radically, that objects (and texts) must exist somehow beyond our sensuous ken; but I contend, following Martin Heidegger, that they come into *being* only as subjects of our own mental efforts.

Consequently, attributes of our thought, not some unknowable reality, determines what exists (for us) and how it is classed. As Heidegger described in his 1927 lectures on phenomenology, modern Western ontology in large part has sustained a division between what is outside (and real, tangible, or sensed—*res extensa*) and what is inside (or imagined, abstracted, or thought—*res cogitans*).¹³ The distinction, which Heidegger will critique, is ultimately inherited from the discourse of Platonism. Broadly speaking, in this binary division of being, there seems to exist a tangible, phenomenal world (known via the senses, but not known in and of itself), and an internal, intangible, abstract world (known via the intellect). Unless one is committed to a naturalistic philosophy, the existential status of these sensed phenomena is indeterminate (phenomenologists argue that they can be accounted for exclusively as objects that are experienced, and not as objects in and of themselves).¹⁴ For this reason, integrity demands an account of objects as-they-are-experienced and, to some degree, of the conditions under which such experience occurs.¹⁵ Furthermore, the integration of diverse objects of thought into a unitary narrative subjects the objects to the effects of our physiological experiential mechanisms—cause and effect, rational order, space, likeness, type, and so forth—and to the effects of our historical, philosophical, and literary models—progress, origins, society, nation, race, self, and so forth. Accordingly, Anglo-Saxon literature most often comes into being today as an early form of modern literature—as its efficient cause, apparently bearing its likeness, apparently written by ancestors of today’s Englishmen, and apparently primitive or pure in its expression of native, ethnic themes.

Ethnicity is such an experiential mechanism: an intuitive, but vaguely defined means of categorizing individuals by class or order, often into purportedly natural collectives. Ethnicity, implying something less proscriptive than race, is commonly considered both a biological and a social construct (the terms *race* and *ethnicity* are often interchangeable).¹⁶ Whether it is indeed biological is apparently unclear (and well beyond my professional competence), but a notion of evolution is nevertheless an important component of any racial theory. Social theories of race and ethnicity since the 1960s have tended to shy from biological determinism and instead discuss the constructedness of race. That race is also socially constructed is not to say that it is therefore incidental. Constructedness is a characteristic of all perceived phenomena. (Philosophical inquiry into phenomena generally has followed upon the Kantian proposition that we can never know anything in and of itself; all phenomena are subject to the mechanisms of our senses and judgment, which implies some measure of constructedness in everything we sense or think. But one needs be wary of a *reductio ad absurdum*: not all phenomena are equally arbitrary because they are equally constructed.) As I argue below, there is nothing unnatural or incidental to the constructedness of an Anglo-Saxon race. Recent work on medieval and antique ethnicity is reminding a too often myopic twenty-first century that an apparatus of ethnic or racial identity

is not a recent development; consequently, my claim in this book is that constructions of race have influenced the form, division, and reception of Anglo-Saxon literature since at least the eighth century.¹⁷ The apparatus or model of ethnic identity has historical form and is modified as it passes from generation to generation. Because models of race influence the study and production of language, they have had great effect on the very idea of an Anglo-Saxon literature, on the idea of an Anglo-Saxon race, and on the idea of an Anglo-Saxon England. These governing ideas constrain critics (and possibly writers) to entertain only certain texts, and, as with poetry, often in ways that ask us to foster expectations of encountering unsophisticated or primitive song.

A presumption of Anglo-Saxon naiveté can feed a correlative presumption that Old English poets, much like children, were credulous of fable and fiction. Their literature would therefore exhibit an aesthetic innocence and honesty, devoid of willful misrepresentation, and thus be susceptible to historical recovery. Straining against these presumptions, J.R.R. Tolkien warned readers that *Beowulf* is mostly art masquerading as history: “The illusion of historical truth and perspective, that has made *Beowulf* seem such an attractive quarry, is largely a product of art.”¹⁸ One important point here is that artful representation apparently impedes a people’s history but enriches a people’s poetry. A governing distinction here is mimetic: on the one hand is a scientific and purportedly objective history in the style of Edward Gibbon, on the other is an art that finds its source and exercise in imagination and subjectivity. Both in their textual manifestations nevertheless narrate the character of a collective. As a voice for a community, poetry is part of the cultural mechanism that proposes ethnic distinction, and heroic poetry in part serves to valorize that distinction, giving it moral force. Ross Poole notes, “A representation of the community is a constitutive presence in [its social] relations.”¹⁹ And Anglo-Saxon poetry offers fairly consistent images of communities.²⁰ But the question as Tolkien formed it was far more substantial: it concerned the evidentiary relation of poetry to a historical description of the community which produced it. In this respect, with any given poetic image of a community, two general questions need to be addressed. The first concerns genre, specifically whether literary representations are useful as historical evidence. Frantzen has warned that with poetry, “Too easily and too frequently, the culture seen through these texts appears to be composed of undifferentiated and unifying stereotypes.”²¹ The second question is a slightly more philosophical one, and concerns the degree to which stories affect our judgments of the objects of our perception—in other words, whether and how stories create intellectual models through which we understand the world.

Stories offer models of inheritance, which in turn can shape literary tradition. The Greek word *ἱστορίαι* means both an attempt at objective reporting or simply a narration, or plot.²² Thucydides, author in the late fifth century B.C. of *The Peloponnesian War*, offered “an account verifiable by eyewitnesses still alive,”

while Herodotus, his contemporary and author most famously of the *History*, “feels no need to assess...the accuracy of what he hears.”²³ Among the Greeks of the third century A.D., there was “a general indifference to the distinction between history and myth.”²⁴ Latin inherited the Greek term and its wide semantic range. Propertius, Cicero, Quintilian, Juvenal, Nero, Plautus, and others use it to mean a narrative or account, but not necessarily a factual one. Still in the twelfth century, a distinction between fiction and nonfiction was made, but not commonly attended to. Hugh of St. Victor distinguished between the record of actual events (*res gestae*) and their larger significance (*largius accipi*, often theological) both of which were recorded in a history, but each of which was distinguished primarily by how it was to be read—literally or figuratively.²⁵ Origen makes this same distinction in his *Against Celsus* where he writes that pearls of divine wisdom (larger significance) ought not to be cast before swine (that is, expressed literally or too simply):

It is sufficient, however, to represent in the style of a historic narrative what is intended to convey a secret meaning in the garb of history, that those who have the capacity may work out for themselves all that relates to the subject.²⁶

There seems to be, for the most part, a similar understanding among AngloSaxon writers. The Venerable Bede includes reports from both verifiable sources and unverifiable oral tradition, as well as miracle stories and saints’ lives, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (hereafter *HE*) of 731.²⁷ With respect to the first twenty-three chapters of the *HE*, Bede says of his sources “ex priorum maxime scriptis hinc inde collectis ea quae promeremus didicimus” (“I have obtained my material from here and there, chiefly from the writings of earlier writers”).²⁸ None of these writers are listed, although he intriguingly states that most of his sources are written, not oral. Textual tradition seems preferable to Bede, but this does not mean scientific objectivity—one need only think of the complications which arise from the generic diversity of so-called historical texts such as Bede’s *HE* and the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle*.²⁹ Vast portions of the *HE* are today treated generically as fictions (its dream visions, miracle stories, and so forth).

Stories and histories both configure the past into narrative, and set generic conditions for the interpretation of the present. In their susceptibility to interpretative practice, literary representations are not so fundamentally distinct from chronicles, for example.³⁰ If, as Marc Bloch once argued, “it is human consciousness which is the subject-matter of history,” then the putative opposition between poetry and historical fact can be resolved more generally as Nicholas Howe has suggested: “As they interpret the remains of a past culture, all works on Old English language and literature are historical in method and intent.”³¹ Although one must obviously account for degrees of inaccuracy, it is a kind of

historicism to attempt to cull from a poem an authentic expression of its aesthetic or cultural contexts—authentic in its ideological reckoning, but not necessarily in its realism.³² When we inquire into the representation of the burial of Beowulf, for example, we are asking about the audience to which such representations were meaningful—although we may wrongly assume a singular and unified entity called “Anglo-Saxon culture” to whom these representations are directed.³³ But can we sort out what was meaningful and what was dross? Michiel de Certeau writes,

if the narrative of facts takes on the allure of a “fiction” belonging to a given type of discourse, we cannot conclude that the reference to the real is obliterated. This reference has instead been somewhat displaced. It is no longer immediately given by narrated or “reconstituted” objects. It is implied by the creation of “models” (destined to make objects “thinkable”).

De Certeau describes these models, following A.J.Greimas, as comprised of “a set of possible combinations in the organization and transformation of a finite number of elements.”³⁴ Insofar as these models are different from those that precede them, they make “a *social identity* explicit.”³⁵ In this Marxist reading, the objects of historical inquiry remain relatively intact, but novel combinations of objects into a narrative speak to the social aims of an author. In other words, ideology is confessed by the authorial *choice* of certain events and pieces of evidence, not by the events and evidence themselves (again positing a distinction between objects in and of themselves and an internalization of those objects). Presumably, poems do not change, but the aims and methods of critical inquiry do; therefore, it follows from this premise that meaning is solely the product of a critical apparatus, and only by extension of a poem. But this presumes—and wrongly, I contend—that poems have an existence beyond and without criticism, or that literary history is really social history obscured by metaphor. The presumption rests fallaciously on an equation of a text with an author’s uncomplicated and complete confession of a pervasive, controlling, and mystically invisible ideology.

DENKSCHEMATA

A presumably tangible poem and a presumably intangible category of criticism both converge upon the issue of the reading self (the self has long been conceived as a site of mediation between sense and intellection, external and internal phenomena). Yet a division of objects of knowledge into external and internal still saturates (and perhaps handicaps) our best efforts to describe the effects categories such as ethnicity have on literary history.³⁶ The chief difficulty lies in coordinating, under the aegis of this reductive pair, shards of presumably physical evidence with

abstract categories. The inner/outer binary demands that evidence be considered external and “real” while categories are internal and “thought.” Physical evidence thus appears to sit uninflected by its temporal, geographical, and material contexts, and only the categories by which it comes to be articulated as evidence *of something*—by which it comes into mental being—are presumed mutable. But physical evidence is inflected by its contexts; in the first instance, evidence does not exist independently of our thoughts about what constitutes *evidence*. In other words, literature *as a body of evidence* exists only through culturally specific categories articulated in historically specific narratives.³⁷ We do not see Aristotle, for example, reading Homer *as evidence of* early Greek social institutions.³⁸ The coincidence of literature and race seems to derive in part from the way critics have assumed the category of race, and thus, assumed the racial or social limits and functions of the objects of their inquiry. But evidence which corroborates a modern sense of race, which comes into being in academic writing *as early literary evidence of race*, is not the same evidence which was marshaled by medieval writers.³⁹ Early medieval models of ethnicity followed from the notion that behind collective identity was a divine purpose. Race and literature were inextricably tied by the dictates of nature; and the coming into being of texts was a natural, collective phenomenon. Long after the Hunnic invasions, race was the model of collective organization according to which tradition was maintained (and modified), and the bounds of group identity were perpetually, if not always consistently, confirmed.

With some qualification, stories can provide us with culturally and temporally specific categories of organization, *Denkschemata* (“categories of thought”), such as ethnicity.⁴⁰ We can recover metaphors offered by authors to a reading community; or, as Howe has put it, we can ask after “the ways in which the Anglo-Saxons remembered” the myths at the heart of their understanding.⁴¹ In proposing ethnicity as one mental category, we must resist the impulse to assume that this category is inherent in actual bodies—and therefore merely observed rather than proposed. There are at least two reasons for this. The first is that race is not clearly a biological characteristic. Biological features which are genetic (hair and skin color, bone structure, etc.) and thus familial, are sometimes conceived of as racial, since they are occasionally gathered together under sloppy and mutable social categories such as “black,” “white,” “Asian,” “Gallic,” and so forth. But these categories change, even if hair color does not, and *vice versa*; moreover, groups with similar material cultures and dominant genetic traits may nevertheless consider themselves ethnically distinct.⁴² The second reason is that “ethnic” is commonly employed to express a quality of groups: cities, peoples, nations, heathens, and so forth. It is a *type*. From a purely logical perspective, if ethnicity does not or cannot belong first to an individual body, it cannot then belong independently to two individual bodies.⁴³ Therefore, ethnicity is not a quality of bodies alone, but of collectives. (For example, one could say of spectators at a sporting event, “We are a crowd,” but it does not follow then that “I am a crowd.”)

In its articulation, ethnicity is an abstract, social category often corrupted by syncope of a middle term—the syllogism, “This nation is English, I am a member of this nation, therefore I am English,” disguises the fact that a characteristic of group identity is being affirmed as a characteristic of personal identity.⁴⁴ But it follows that ethnicity is a logical and conceptual consequence of how we group people, not of how people actually are independently of one another as actual bodies. Nevertheless, ethnicity is continually predicated of actual bodies. If we are aware of that misqualification, then we can begin to assess ethnic identity a little more rigorously.⁴⁵ The inhabitants of early medieval Britain sorted themselves ethnically in their stories and their histories, and one can categorize the imagined world of ethnic identities according to which this sorting was done. The *gens Anglorum* existed as a qualified collective in the mind of Bede, and he affirmed a complex of Anglo-Saxon ethnicity in his *HE* according to this model, which he had culled from Scripture.

To understand Anglo-Saxon ethnicity generally is not to understand how a people actually was in all its relevant physical manifestations (which are irremediably unrecoverable), but to understand how an author (or group of authors) imagined a collective, and the categories by which those images came into physical being in narrative.⁴⁶ Thus, in terms of the model Tolkien employed, a textual study of ethnicity is both literary and historical. Bede chose to illustrate the Anglo-Saxons chiefly as a *gens*, not as a nation or a republic or a province—although these terms were certainly available to him. He likely read in Jerome that a *gens* was discrete, differentiated from a *natio* by having no *regnum* (royal power), and “no one could go from one *natio* to another.”⁴⁷ But, he also may have read Isidore of Seville, who did not express any clear distinction between *natio* and *gens*.⁴⁸ To some historians, any assumption of stable terminology in this respect belies the imprecision of early medieval social categories. Tribes, as Patrick Geary points out, were not stable entities which could be physically isolated and catalogued, but “processes.” He writes, “The tribe was a constantly changing grouping of people bound together by shared perceptions, traditions, and institutions. As these commonalities changed, tribes changed....”⁴⁹ The commonalities included superficial cultural markers like hairstyle, clothing, and ornamentation—markers capable of adoption by virtually any individual, such as Edward the pseudo-Norman, described above.⁵⁰ But “shared perceptions” are not easily recoverable from bogs; they are largely an affect of literary expression, filtered through traditions of genre, rhetoric, and language.

One important shared perception was that of a common Germanic origin. It might be imagined that Anglo-Saxons saw themselves ethnically as Germanic. But the invading tribes of Britain did not share at the outset—or, at least, did not record—a common sense of “Germanity,” or *Germanentum*. As Walter Goffart writes with respect to the barbarian tribes, “if the anachronistic and untenable concept of *Germanentum* is to be rooted out, the history we write should explicitly

reflect the diversity and disunity of the peoples that the Roman Empire faced across its borders.”⁵¹ We also ought not to shrink from considering the diversity and disunity of the purportedly Germanic tribes of Anglo-Saxon England. How did tribal disunity come to be expressed as an imagined unity by the ninth century, when an explicit sense of a *gens teudisca* seems to have found its way into British texts?⁵² Ethnic disunity sometimes produced an ideal and imagined unity, an abstract community expressed as, but in rhetoric at odds with, political reality.⁵³ French unity in the nineteenth century, for example, was asserted at the expense of millions of natives who neither spoke French nor considered themselves ethnically French. In other words, the ethnicity expressed in texts is not always transparent to a political identity. (This is sometimes at odds with contemporary, especially postmodern critical assumptions about the transparency of literary images of race to an authentic personal experience.) Nevertheless, in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, Saxons and Franks, Vandals and Ostrogoths, Visigoths and Suebi, and others, all portrayed themselves historically as inherently distinct, as ethnic collectives, races or families, divinely disposed according to their tongues and their nations.⁵⁴ A common tongue, a shared language, was the material for a shared compendium of songs and stories. From generation to generation, these songs and stories, imagined in the medium of a tribal language (*lingua gentis*), offer in the fragments that remain to us a voice of race.

LANGUAGE OF ACCOMMODATION

Stories do shape an ethnic imagination (and *vice versa*), the force of which, if it does not provoke belligerence or slaughter, might ultimately promote accommodation. Accommodating the foreign means permitting oneself to understand it through native categories and terms. Querying the foreign via a complex of implication and metaphor inherent in one’s native tongue was (and is) an important function of literary culture.⁵⁵ Anglo-Saxon texts, by serving as sources for models of understanding, helped to accommodate Christianity among a receptive audience of such stories, for example, by narrating the story of Christ in a native style.⁵⁶ Texts codify and acculturate perception by offering categories through which objects of sense might come into social, political, religious, historical, or ethnic being. In this way, texts help to fix categories as propaedeutics to subtler engagements, or, as Boethius argued, words and texts fix a thing (or rather, an *image* of a thing) and its intellection in a language.⁵⁷ But there arises a thorny problem. Not all languages are the same lexically. So, it seems to follow that the intellection of objects may be subject to the caprices of a particular language’s semantic structures.⁵⁸ Moreover, insofar as that language-specific semantic structure defines a speaker’s relationship to the world, a speaker may only know the world well through texts in his or her own language. This is known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (after Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf),

which equates the structure and limits of language with the structure and limits of thought—famously illustrated with the fallacy of dozens of Innu words for snow. Textual culture, including poetry and fiction, thus seems to provide a language-specific instrument for intellection of the world. Does the matrix of language, literature, and race limit the means by which each of us can understand the world? Current linguistic thinking argues otherwise, as did a number of medieval grammarians, Chomsky's Modistae among them.

In some medieval grammatical theory, all languages are considered a mirror of the world, and the study of the significance of terms, whether in Latin or Greek or Gothic, is a study of the hidden depths of the world.⁵⁹ The ninth-century philosopher John Scotus Eriugena, for example, says that meaning is like a fountain: it does not originate at the visible source, but in a hidden place beyond.⁶⁰ By the logic of this simile, all languages express similar, fundamental meanings regardless of lexical difference (e.g., this implies *pater* means fundamentally the same thing as *father*, *père*, *papa*, etc.). But sometimes paradoxically, since a language is organized in part by semantic fields, a translated word may place a thing or an idea within a larger set of linked associations unknown to the original. For example, Varro, considered in the Middle Ages next to Virgil and Cicero as one of the great Latin stylists, relates how *facere*, to make, derives from *facies*, external appearance, because someone who makes puts an external appearance on something.⁶¹ The specious etymology (specious to us, but not to Varro) is available only in Latin, and thus presented literate readers with an association between making and appearance unavailable to readers of French or English for whom *appearance* has more to do with seeing than with making. The web of connotations in English is different from the web of connotations in Latin.⁶² A literate engagement with a poem in English is flavored with an array of associations and linked images (possibly) alien to an engagement with the same poem translated into Latin, or *vice versa*. (When we say we "understand" a poem, often we mean that we recognize an array of associations it is invoking.) And yet we should allow that literate engagement does not necessarily limit the range of one's perception or imagination. Metaphors are built out of established associations, but associations do not always control behavior or accurately describe political or social configurations. Foreigners, for example, those who occupy a distinct category in the native ethnic scheme, will often accrue as a linguistic (and thereby as a logical) category certain distinct, semantic associations. The resulting semantic fields determine the constitution of the foreign in literary use, accurately or not. When we argue about or describe the "foreign" as opposed to a particular foreign individual, we are not typically arguing about or describing actual persons, but about a category embedded in and containing other categories (what I am calling a model).⁶³ But applying that category to the real world is another story entirely.

Newcomers are described according to extant lexis, lexis such as *foreign*, even if lexical connotations are insufficient for accuracy. Since one cannot express something entirely outside one's realm of experience, a truly new thing would be inexpressible. In literary negotiations of communities, foreigners and outsiders are sometimes spoken of as monstrous or as fearsome variations on existing creatures, beings somehow recognizable *quae maximum formidinis terrorem humano generi incutiunt*, as the author of the eighth-century *Liber monstrorum* puts it.⁶⁴ Whatever or whoever is described as new or alien, if not too terrible, may be accommodated into domestic categories. A language's prevalent metaphors of alterity help to accommodate the foreign referent, whose reference in turn becomes culturally and semantically digested by the language of expression. While social accommodation may render the alien domestic and make the foreign familiar, literary accommodation places the foreign inside a native discourse, fitting it to a preordered complex of metaphor and implication. By fitting the alien into an array of native associations, language and narrative fix newly arrived groups, or *ingressus hostiles*, in the historical record. The fixity of such language may well be at odds with the instability of social categories and at odds with actual accommodation. Rejecting the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, I argue in a later chapter, for example, that it is precisely the force of literary accommodation which affects the successive versions of Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, but that this does not necessarily reflect any political reality during the composition and editing of the sermon. At best, it reflects Wulfstan's shifting opinion as it in turn may effect his inscrutable choices for including or excluding this or that phrase.

Language and narrative can familiarize an ethnic voice by incorporating the structures and metaphors of foreign stories into the native register. A major element in Anglo-Saxon England which helped both to maintain and to mitigate foreignness, or literary heterogeneity, was a Roman, historicized story of origins. Anglo-Saxons narrated their imagined past in terms of an accommodated Roman literary genre. As Michael Wallace-Hadrill notes, "The very actions of reading and writing history were Roman; to conceive of [oneself] in a historical context was Roman."⁶⁵ A Romanized story of ethnic origin, or *ethnogenesis*, brought the Continental past of particular Anglo-Saxon ancestors to bear on the insular present, and fixed tribal differences specifically and importantly through the medium of narratives which had been domesticated from imported, Latin sources. Native Anglo-Saxon texts which sought wide authority thereby fixed lines of ethnic demarcation by invoking the models of Latin textual culture (usually in the Latin language and in a Latin script form). While certain Anglo-Saxon stories described in part who belonged and who did not, these stories were told often in Latin and according to Latin conventions. It is important to remember that in the early eighth century, Bede explicitly calls Latin one of the five *native* tribal languages of Anglo-Saxon England, even though Latin was also the language of the Latins, the tribe which inhabited Rome. Latin could be historically accommodated as a native

language since it was both the language of the Catholic Church, configured racially as the *gens Christianorum* (the Christian people) and because speakers of Latin had, since the Roman invasion, been native to Britain. By the late ninth century, when knowledge of Latin seems to have been in decline in England, some of these Latin texts and literary conventions were being translated into Old English, accommodated, naturalized, and ingested.

Anglo-Saxon stories of origins were no mere fictions: like the proverbial mustard seed, beginnings are sometimes imagined as compressions of ethnic immanence, sufficiently explanatory illustrations of the whys and wherefores of ethnic characteristics. Contemporary American examples might include the folk story of George Washington and the cherry tree, or stories of the assiduous industry of the Plymouth pilgrims, both of which assumedly tell citizens of the United States something about what it means to be and to behave like an American (whether one does or not). This is one role of origin stories in the larger social system of language and narrative; within these systems, there is a place for and a set of characteristics pertaining to narratives of beginnings. These metaphors purport to describe a simple past, a pure beginning. Beginnings are themselves metaphors, born into language from narrative demands: a story, after all, must start somewhere. The metaphoric in common usage becomes literal, and the divinations of poets (*L. vates*), the origins of races, and narratives of history all provide the mental categories that can give meaning to perception.⁶⁶ The structures of historical memory, however inaccurate they may be, serve in part to control literary invention—we write anew from out of a written past.⁶⁷ And the past is a story, structured according to inherited or adopted conventions. The origins of a people are a narrative element which logically implies much more; it is a story likening a *gens* to an individual, born distinct among the peoples of the world and growing to maturity. Some *gentes* are thought to progress, some to remain in childhood, some to die away. The metaphoric beginnings of races and the implications of the narratives that propose such beginnings are the primary interest of this study. Ultimately, these narratives delimit the audience within which literature is thought to have its effect, organizing around some central set of common characteristics and a common language the native audience of a corpus of prose and poetry. Among other things, the category of ethnic self is potentially fixed and shaped by stories, language, and metaphoric divisions, which a distinct storytelling community keeps alive from generation to generation. It is perhaps not too much to say that the very existence of nations and tribes is fixed only in the spoken, written, and visual language which a small number of literate members of a self-described community produces, maintains, declares, modifies, and reacts against.⁶⁸

ETHNOGENESIS

The beginning of a people is called *ethnogenesis*, defined as “the process whereby a people, that is an ethnic group, comes into existence.”⁶⁹ The two roots involved here are the Greek *ethnos* and *genos*, terms which even Herodotus sometimes confuses, but which are distinguishable in that *genos* alone suggests “a group into which one enters at birth.”⁷⁰ Latin inherited these terms, and Gr. *ethnos* retained its connotation of heathen in L. *ethnice* and L. *ethnicus*. Current (in)accuracy of the terminology of ethnicity and race as it applies to the early Middle Ages is sometimes a function of contemporary cultural sensitivity, and is implicated in the discourse of alterity which pervades a number of current discussions of race.⁷¹ The early Middle Ages are also rarely a place contemporary scholars of race will be found. Ethnogenesis looks to the schemata of the past, examines evidence of myths and names especially, and attempts to discover *Denkschemata* (or structured ways of thinking) that ancient ethnographers and historians used to differentiate groups of people from one another.⁷² Again, it is not with historical facts of the matter that ethnogenesis is concerned, instead “one must investigate the traditional motifs available to the author and accepted or even expected by his audience. In sum it is the language of myth that is in question here, and its impact on the collective consciousness of peoples and their elites.”⁷³ Social impact is not, in my opinion, a *direct* result of a narrative, and it seems to me that literature is rarely an immediate cause of social phenomena.⁷⁴ Instead, the language of ethnicity engages common semantic associations, perhaps expanding them, but nonetheless invoking, reproducing, and testing their already extant dichotomies and distinctions. (Literary language can modify a model, a point illustrated by Aristotle, who remarks that a Homeric image of the sun sowing its light permits us to imagine its rays to be like seeds.) The “whiting” of the Irish in the United States exemplifies a similar conceptual change in categorization, not a change in actual qualities of Irish men and women or their narrated origins.⁷⁵ Here we see the result of an accommodated *Denkschema*, of semantic expansion, that has been socially adopted. The force of language on options available for behavior, the definitive and logical function of semantic categories, and narratives of ethnogenesis are not always socially productive.

Neither is ethnogenesis always construed politically. A paradigmatic study in ethnogenesis with which Anglo-Saxonists may be familiar is by Tacitus, the first-century ethnographer and historian who wrote the *Germania*, an ethnographic description of Europe’s barbarian peoples. In it, Tacitus divides the barbarians by tribe, and traces that division to an originating myth, a story of ethnogenesis. That originating myth, which is disclosed at the very outset of his study, describes the relation of the tribes of Germania to the sons of the god Mannus: Ingævones, Herminones, and Istævones.⁷⁶ The division of tribes is not illustrated as a result of socio-political forces, but as an extension of a natural, divine, and originating

force. Tacitus shows that the most appealing language for early medieval origin stories is not political, but religious. Herwig Wolfram writes, “according to the language of myth, the origin of an archaic people, *origo gentis, initia gentis*, is divine.”⁷⁷ But what precisely early medieval people believed about their origins, we cannot know, although we can observe that the language in which some authors articulated the origins of a community was similar to the language through which authors expressed divinity. In the same way that Varro tied “making” to “appearance,” the semantic range that inhered in narratives of origin implicitly tied divinity to beginnings. The story of ethnic origins therefore binds a moral imperative to the self-identification of a community. We can reasonably posit an underlying assumption about the obligation of an individual to group cohesion. Were one to ignore such obligations, and to ignore one’s own people’s stories, one would threaten the divine cohesion of a family and, by extension, of a people. Thus, a threat of exile, for example, relatively rare among Anglo-Saxon punishments in legal texts, was primarily the threat of a moral stigma.⁷⁸

The story of ethnic origins generally offers categories by which one might assert who belongs and who does not. Bede’s *HE* begins with an ethnic story of origins by differentiating the ethnically autonomous *gens Anglorum* from the other *gens* who populate the island of Britain, itself comprised of numerous kingdoms. Bede therefore declares at the outset to whom his *HE* as an ethnic story belongs and to whom it does not. This has a further implication that, until the arrival of Christianity, there is in Bede’s account no necessary moral obligation obtaining between the Angles and any other peoples on the island. Bede’s history begins as a story primarily for the Anglian people. As it develops, though, the compass of his collective identity philanthropically expands to include all the *gentes Christianorum* on the island. As the New Testament’s Christianity extended the franchise of Hebrew election to all believers, so does Bede’s Christian history extend the franchise of Anglian election to all of Britain’s believers. Bede’s Angles are portrayed as the priest among nations. The claim Bede is advancing is that as the family of Angles coheres under divine election, so will the family of Britain’s Christians. Therefore, doctrinal differences (such as concerned the dating of Easter) carry ethnic or familial import, and thereby threaten the *social* stability of the island, as well as the election of its Christian population. The story of ethnic origins that begins the ninth-century Alfredian, Old English translation of the *HE* is altered slightly from Bede’s Latin, and extends the invitation of belonging to a slightly different audience. The Old English *HE* is primarily, but not exclusively, an Anglo-Saxon (that is, a combination of Anglian, Saxon, Kentish, Mercian, and so forth) or English story, mapping out potential ethnicities in the semantic fields of the Old English language. It forgoes the niceties of distinction and semantic connection between Latin terms like *gens*, *natio*, *provincia*, and *res publica* for its own Anglo-Saxon terms and their connotations.

Ethnogenesis is only one step towards grouping distinct traditions of Anglo-Saxon texts; it presents us with the ethnic presuppositions that implicitly inform the scope of some texts' audiences. In a field where the dating and localization of poems pose a constant worry, this proposed ethnic organization may be of some help—although I am skeptical of a wide application of a relatively limited method, since not all texts engage ethnic metaphors.⁷⁹ Some stories were written on behalf of Angles, some on behalf of AngloSaxons, and some again on behalf of Englishmen. By paying closer attention to the ethnic distinctions present in texts, we can try to determine which were which, always with an eye towards the shifting shape and scope of Anglo-Saxon ethnicity—and always alert to what Wolfram describes as “all the underlying meanings and connotations of the texts which express values alien to modern intellectual standards and experiences.”⁸⁰ That they are alien does not make them incomprehensible; but we should not be deluded into thinking we can recover them whole—even assuming that these values were conceivable as a whole in Anglo-Saxon England. The borders of textual culture are porous, and a few texts are constantly being imported and exported. Gaining a purchase on the shape of Anglo-Saxon textual culture at any given moment means in part understanding the changes it enacted on its own textual inheritance, as well as the changes it enacts on ours as we accommodate it to our own critical presuppositions.

AN ANGLO-SAXON RACE

The models through which we imagine Anglo-Saxons understood race are filtered through—and thus further distorted by—twenty-first-century notions of culture, society, self-determination, political boundaries, and race. With sufficient empathy and imagination, we can partly reconstruct some of their models, notwithstanding the difficulty of isolating the effects of our own cultural filters. Chief among our filters is *emotivism*. Emotivism, which took its modern shape in the mid-nineteenth century, is a doctrine which positions the self, specifically its intuition and feelings, as the ultimate arbiter of ethical life (and thus of identity).⁸¹ At the end of *War and Peace*, Count Leo Tolstoy writes that “in history the difficulty of recognizing the subjection of the individual to the laws of space, time, and cause lies in renouncing the spontaneous feeling of independence of one's own personality.” Even though we do not feel our dependence, Tolstoy says, personal sensation impedes our understanding it—just as accepting the laws of astronomy calls for renouncing the very clear sensation of a stationary earth.⁸² So, too, with moral law, as Alisdair MacIntyre and others have argued: emotivism, which posits the primacy of one's own feelings as guides to moral and social (and aesthetic) issues, cannot suffice as a grounds for an ethics of social justice.⁸³ Familiar Western notions of identity tend to be characterized at their extremes by moral and intellectual solipsism, a dominant and introspective self-interest that

contextualizes any understanding of the limits of polity, and thus of ethnicity. Emotivism ultimately arises from a sense that an arbiter of moral law (and, indeed, of aesthetic law) somehow exists within each individual. One need go no further back than John Calvin, for example, to read, “That there exists in the human mind and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endued all men with some idea of his Godhead, the memory of which he constantly renews and occasionally enlarges....”⁸⁴ This innate knowledge sufficient for judgment is in turn developed in Kantian and post-Kantian thought, which internalized Nature as a category of phenomena rather than as a result of judgment, and the synthetic and analytic conditions necessary to render judgment.⁸⁵ Whatever might be concluded from this rough sketch, it can be said generally that only within the last few centuries has judgment by an individual untutored by tradition or schools been considered sufficiently informed.⁸⁶

But in Anglo-Saxon England, the moral law was primarily to be understood as a collective phenomenon. It was, in the imagery of Scripture, a law given to a people, not separately to individuals, although individuals could independently accept it. The self was not its source, even though the self intellected the moral law—and the self required clerical (that is, expert and literate) assistance to do so. To the extent that the self is defined in relation to a moral (or legal) code, Anglo-Saxon selves were first and foremost responses to social orders, not extrapolations of first principles drawn from Kantian or Cartesian or Protestant introspection. This does not mean that Anglo-Saxons were incapable of introspection (the manuscript history of Augustine’s *Confessions* in Anglo-Saxon England alone belies this), but that such introspection was not a *sufficient* means of understanding one’s familial and ethical duties. The juridical conditions of word and act were assessed according to a communal *telos*, a larger end to human history (to Anglo-Saxon Christians, this was largely defined by the narrative of salvation). To the extent that the individual acted or wrote in such a way as to promote this common *telos*, that individual wrote or acted morally. An individual’s act was also gauged against civil criteria which were extrapolated from a revealed *telos* and codified in law. The modern, emotivist self, “is now thought of as criterionless, because the kind of *telos* in terms of which it once judged and acted is no longer thought to be credible.”⁸⁷ In very broad terms, my argument is that poetry, as a vehicle of ethnic and moral discourse responsive to this *telos*, was not primarily an expression of a personal self, but primarily a figurative response to the moral tensions of timeless juridical demands.⁸⁸ While this emphasis did nothing to deny the concomitant pleasure of linguistic and formal play, it nevertheless spoke, often in symbolic terms, to the social and moral obligations of its readers.

Identity and self were and are genuine questions—“es sind echte Fragen,” as Manfred Frank writes. Contingent on them are attitudes towards soul, individuality, community, morality, spirituality, and being itself.⁸⁹ Identity is one

of the principal issues of concern for early medieval philosophers like Boethius, Porphyry, Plotinus, John Scotus, Odo of Tours, and many others.⁹⁰ They concentrated mainly on the mechanisms of individuation, a focus which speaks obliquely but importantly to questions of race. Race is a way of describing the relation between two or more individuals, and is therefore a universal predicated of particulars. In one respect, it describes the collective to which the individual is morally responsible; in another sense, race describes the collective on behalf of which an author is writing. In the next section, I look to modern characterizations of early medieval racial identity in order to assess how a model of an Anglo-Saxon race is currently articulated. Two issues concern me here. The first, easily dismissed, is the *canard* that selfhood is a late medieval invention, which is belied by the speculation on selves by early medieval philosophers; and, as David Aers writes, arises from “insubstantial claims based on an identifiable cluster of ideological needs and, in the case of early modernist proponents, a bizarrely narrow acquaintance with medieval texts.”⁹¹ To put it broadly, identity—personal and ethnic—has always been at issue in the West. The second issue is the catalogue of racial ideas that stands behind influential historical reconstructions of Anglo-Saxon England. One of the most important is derived from Tacitus.

TACITUS AND A GERMANIC RACE

The origins of English literature were imagined at the end of the nineteenth century to reflect fundamental characteristics of an English race. Literature generally was thought to express the salient characteristics of a people, and early literature to express its most enduring characteristics. As Frantzen has pointed out, nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxonists and their predecessors “used Anglo-Saxon studies to identify, and then to recover, their cultural beginnings,” and this also includes racial beginnings.⁹² Racial beginnings were seen as simple and pure, like water at its mountain source, as an unmixed and uncorrupted element. “Des Menschen Seele/Gleicht dem Wasser/Von Himmel kommt es” (“The soul of man is like water: it comes from heaven”), writes Goethe. Alfred wrote in his epilogue to Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* that the earth’s living waters flowed from heaven and through the hearts of Christians.⁹³ Like water and blood, so did races seem ultimately to run pure. Henry Morley, author in 1864 of *English Writers*, wrote that “the imaginative elements in English literature are due to the admixture of Celtic blood in English people.”⁹⁴ This chemical metaphor presumes an elemental purity to the English blood later compounded with its Celtic counterpart. The twentieth century has seen the extension of similar sentiments, hoping to isolate an elemental English *gravitas* in the Periodic Table of races. Charles D. Wright, using a metaphor of weaving, notes:

Scholars who have tried to isolate Irish and ‘Roman’ strands in the English cultural weave have often resorted to impressionistic characterizations of ‘Celtic’ temperament. Typically, Roman and English ‘gravity’ and ‘sobriety’ are contrasted with Irish ‘imagination’ and ‘exuberance’—a colourful Celtic fringe around a sturdy Saxon warp and Roman weft.⁹⁵

Old English literature purportedly illustrates the sobriety of the English race, and, as the metaphor of human development is mapped onto literary history, Old English literature was portrayed as the naïve and honest expression of this uncomplicated sincerity. An English race needed a pure English origin, and a correlative purity of sentiment. John Mitchell Kemble, the extraordinarily influential and learned historian whose 1848 *The Saxons in England* informed so many later Anglo-Saxonists, wrote that Anglo-Saxon literature and history is “the history of the childhood of our own age.”⁹⁶ His primitivism here, not unusual among his peers, is combined with a sense of shared racial characteristics to produce a historical image of naïve AngloSaxons, a pure race of pure blood free of all that was not essentially (meaning originally) English. This historical image was later employed to describe the fundamental character of English literature by imagining an English literary and racial inheritance, a golden thread that runs through English books, as it were. For example, Charles Kingsley, author of *The Roman and the Teuton*, wrote in 1864, “Happy for us Englishmen...keeping unbroken the old Teutonic laws, unstained the old Teutonic faith and virtue.”⁹⁷ In 1898, Stopford A. Brooke began his study of English literature with questions of climate and race since he thought “questions of race are often questions of literature.”⁹⁸ Brooke thought the Englishman as a racial type combined “the Celtic love and the German fear of wild nature,” not atypically calling the Saxons “a singing folk.”⁹⁹ C.L. Wrenn, who produced a respected study of Old English literature in 1967, related to his readers the four “dominating features” of the Anglo-Saxon *race*. These were its love of ordered ceremony, its conservative traditionalism, its ethical consciousness, and its power of assimilation. He saw these racial characteristics mirrored in the literature the Anglo-Saxons produced; and these features “survive as continuing influences on later Britain.”¹⁰⁰ Wrenn defines culture as the expression of a people, thus explicitly positioning arts and literature as the effect of race—and literature as a collection of transparent social or racial documents. The argument advances the proposition that a certain temperament, alive in a common blood, produces a certain literature, and by describing this racial temperament, one describes—according to a kind of psychological and physiological determinism—its literary style. Wrenn’s combination of literature and race, circumscribed by national boundaries, engages a powerful model of how race is thought to voice itself in textual and material culture. And like so many before him, Wrenn distinguished between Roman racial characteristics and Germanic ones. Race is thus implicated in the very genres by

which Anglo-Saxon literature is classed, although the determinism of race for Wrenn and his predecessors, it might be argued, now is configured as a determinism of “culture.”

It may have been Thomas Wharton’s *The History of English Poetry*, produced between 1774 and 1781, which raised to prominence the questions of “race and national character” in the critical study of Old English literature.¹⁰¹ Wharton attributed perceived racial characteristics to Anglo-Saxon poetry, seeing it stereotypically as evocative of Germanic order and high seriousness. This racial identity was given its most popular voice in Sharon Turner’s *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, published between 1799 and 1805. In this pioneering historical work, the early Anglo-Saxons are portrayed as rude barbarians coming slowly and innocently towards civilized behavior. Their poetry is classed according to its function in a purportedly rude society.¹⁰² Turner saw *Beowulf*, for example, as a portrait of the actual manners of Anglo-Saxon society.¹⁰³ By 1847, Ludwig Ettmüller had catalogued two distinct literary traditions at work in Anglo-Saxon poetry based ultimately on ethnic distinctions: the native Germanic folk tradition and the foreign Roman one. His divisions with regard to the poetry were made according to genres presumably but not demonstrably typical of ancient Germanic (and thus racial) tradition—a tradition notable for its lack of written records. Ettmüller’s bifurcated and exclusive literary traditions still inform major genre divisions in Anglo-Saxon studies. For example, Andreas Heusler, one of the most important critics of *Liedertheorie*, noted not atypically that ancient Germanic poetry was “unrömische,” and shaped neither by bookish nor monkish tradition.¹⁰⁴

In 1863, the French positivist Hippolyte Taine produced what Daniel Calder called, perhaps with only slight exaggeration, “one of the most influential documents in literary and social criticism during the nineteenth century.” *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* was translated into English by H. van Laun in 1871. Taine’s approach was similarly racial and geographical, holding that “anything in literature can be explained by one of three external circumstances: race (nationality), surroundings or milieu, and epoch.”¹⁰⁵ Taine, like many before him, saw Anglo-Saxon society as an uneasy combination of Roman and Germanic ethnic traditions. He wrote of Roman civilization’s calming effect on the belligerent Germans: “Take [Roman] civilization from this soil, and there will remain to the inhabitants only war, the chase, gluttony, drunkenness. Smiling love, sweet poetic dreams, art, refined and nimble thought, are for the happy shores of the Mediterranean.”¹⁰⁶ Civilization belongs, in this (largely Roman Catholic) view, to the races of the Mediterranean, and only barbarity is natural to the Germans and Franks. To Taine, timeless racial uniformity promises in any given poem competing Germanic and Roman elements. It is therefore in the Germanic original, free of Roman “interpolations,” that presumably “authentic” Old English poetry is discovered. One can see the influence of this idea in attempts to clear

Beowulf of Christian interpolations, thus restoring an “original” or “authentic” text—as if Anglo-Saxon Christian verse is somehow inauthentically Anglo-Saxon.

Anglo-Saxonists have long concerned themselves with stories of ethnic origins, whether in order to promote a political or religious cause, or to understand the composition of their recently constituted national communities.¹⁰⁷ The origins of English literature and English social institutions are invariably tied up with issues of race if only because ethnicity serves to delimit the field of inquiry. This is also the case with Anglo-Saxon literature. Whether or not its poems and histories are seen to fulfill cultural roles, such as recording cultural memory or creating a common identity, Anglo-Saxon culture as we interpret it is invariably a product of its written testimony construed according to changing models of race.¹⁰⁸ In this combination of contexts and origins, we have ethnogenesis, or the recorded stories of the beginnings of a people. Successive generations of Anglo-Saxons, like successive generations of Anglo-Saxonists, interpreted their own origins, and thus continually created a beginning for themselves, an ethnogenesis. This issue of origins, of the perceived beginnings of ethnic identity in Anglo-Saxon England informs the relationship between the ethnic self and the literary community which gives it shape. By offering a story of origins, the cultural and literary exclusivity of the Anglo-Saxons is imagined within a metaphor of biological origin.

But to assume a pure English origin, one must first assume the autonomy of German culture generally. Such an assumption is invariably derived from claims of German autonomy found in Tacitus’ *Germania*, a hugely influential work in Anglo-Saxon studies. The *Germania* has been the source of much contentious debate in Anglo-Saxon literary and historical studies. In the case of native military institutions, it is often the sole authority since, as Carleton Huntley Hayes rightly notes, “The early Germans themselves left no records, not a book, not an inscription, not a monument.”¹⁰⁹ The status of the *Germania* must be addressed before attempting any fair recreation of a model of Anglo-Saxon race.

Writing in 98 A.D., the Roman senator, consul, and later governor of Asia wrote his *Germania* in a long tradition of ethnographic monographs. One line of historical argument claims that he was never in German lands, and that he took his information primarily from Latin literary sources and from Germans visiting Rome, although all this is unlikely.¹¹⁰ The *Germania*, as opposed to Tacitus’ more historical *Annals*, is an odd mix of probable facts and certain fictions. As such, it does not immediately recommend itself as a credible historical source, at least as far as current definitions of history go.¹¹¹ Yet, its importance to modern articulations of a Germanic race cannot be overestimated. In 1943, the SS were tasked by the German cultural ministry, the *Ahnenerbe*, to repatriate the oldest surviving manuscript of the *Germania*, the *Urgeschichte* of the German *Volk*, long the subject of international wrangling between Hitler and Mussolini.¹¹² It was one of the first books printed in Germany, and prompted works like Jacob Wimpfeling’s *Teutschland* (1501) which “made forceful contrasts between the

diseased south [Rome] and the healthy north.”¹¹³ For five hundred years, the *Germania* authorized a romantic distinction between a purportedly pure, masculine, and oral culture of the north and the corrupted, feminine, and literary culture of Rome.

Tacitus writes in the ethnographic tradition of Strabo, Herodotus, and Sallust, producing what may or may not be intended as a moral corrective for his own countrymen.¹¹⁴ The *Germania* is certainly of a piece with a larger classical tradition which lauds the natural simplicity of the barbarians, an historiographical habit T.A.Dorey describes as “a romantic love of the simple and unsophisticated life of the past.”¹¹⁵ A.C.Murray terms this same tendency “pastoralism,” which he defines as an historian’s belief in society’s development from “a primitive communism,...[defined] by a lack of private property, of fixed boundaries dividing up the land, and of significant social distinctions.”¹¹⁶ It is not unique to the modern age. In the first half of the fifth century, Salvian, in language reminiscent of Kemble, described an idealized, pastoral barbarian relation: “The men of the same clan, and following the same king, love one another with true affection.”¹¹⁷ But W.R.Jones, writing on the image of the barbarian in medieval Europe, notes that admirers of the barbarian (of whom Salvian incidentally was not) “were usually just applauding in him what they imagined to be their own lost innocence—those pristine qualities abandoned by their ancestors in their journey from simplicity and purity towards the delicious vices of civilization.”¹¹⁸ The idealized barbarian and an idealized barbarian society often served as implicit correctives to Roman mores, as perhaps idealized versions of Anglo-Saxon society painted in Old English literature may have served as correctives to Anglo-Saxon mores.

Also troubling with respect to its evidentiary value is the textual history of the *Germania*. Scholars are not generally well disposed to admitting the influence of a unique manuscript which went wholly unmentioned in medieval or antique Europe.¹¹⁹ Yet the *Germania* is in a much more precarious situation, since not a single antique or medieval manuscript exists. The *Germania* is extant in one fifteenth-century codex of fifteenth-century provenance: the Codex Aesinas.¹²⁰ All others are more recent recensions. The Codex Aesinas, MS. Lat. 8 of the private library of Conte Balleschi-Balleani, great-nephew of Count Balleani of lesi, in whose library Professor Cesare Annibaldi rediscovered the manuscript in 1902, contains fifteenth-century copies of the *Agricola*, *Germania*, and Dictys Cretensis’ *Bellum Troianum*. (One might reasonably title this manuscript a book of origin stories.) The *Agricola* is believed to have belonged to an unattested, lost quaternion of a ninth-century manuscript known as the Hersfeld Codex. (The Hersfeld Codex is so-called since the only testament to its putative existence lies in a series of vague fifteenth-century letters between the Italian humanist, Poggio, and an unnamed, mysterious book-selling monk of Hersfeld on whose reports Poggio presumably based his claim that the *Germania* was extant.¹²¹) The Hersfeld Codex

is believed to have been produced at Fulda in the midninth century, but this is again speculation.¹²² Based only on the generic relation of the *Agricola* to the *Germania* as minor works of Tacitus, it has been assumed that the *Germania* also appeared in the unattested Hersfeld Codex.¹²³ This assumption is circumstantially evinced by a ninth-century paraphrase of very brief sections of the *Germania* by Ruodolphus Fuldensis, or Rudolf of Fulda, in his *Translatio S. Alexandri*.¹²⁴ Due to this shallow pedigree, the *edition princeps* of the *Germania* has long been the 1472 incunabulum known as the *Spirensis*.¹²⁵

Three authors presumably testify to the existence of the *Germania* in the Middle Ages: Einhard, the famous biographer of Charlemagne; Adam of Bremen; and Rudolf of Fulda. Rosemary Woolf cites most of the accepted evidence which testifies to the antiquity of the *Germania*: Einhard “echoes the *Germania*” Adam of Bremen “echoed the *Germania*” and “Rudolf of Fulda quoted copiously from it.”¹²⁶ Another piece of related evidence from Fulda which Woolf does not mention is the *Annals of Fulda*, in which Tacitus is again cited.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, I have been unable to locate any clear “echoes” of the *Germania* in the *Vita Caroli* (829 A.D.—836 A.D.), possibly since Einhard was so poorly disposed towards the Saxons and likely would not have cited Tacitus’ often laudatory description of them.¹²⁸ Adam of Bremen, in his *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* (c. 1075 A.D.) simply quotes Einhard.¹²⁹ But none of these quotes look to be “echoes” of the *Germania*, although they may be echoes of other works by Tacitus. Of course, Adam also quotes Gregory of Tours, Bede, Orosius, Marcianus Capella, Cassiodorus, Paul the Deacon, and Rudolf of Fulda’s *Translatio S. Alexandri*, and it is presumably this last which alone implies a tie between Adam and Tacitus.¹³⁰ Adam refers to Rudolf’s *Translatio* (an. 863 A.D., and an. 889–91 A.D.), but neither directly nor indirectly to Tacitus; Adam notes, as Rudolf of Fulda says, in 861 A.D., Saint Alexander was translated to Saxony.¹³¹ Of the three authors, Adam of Bremen and Einhard do not seem to have known Tacitus’ *Germania*. But in his edition of the *Translatio*, Heinrich Pertz notes that Rudolf of Fulda borrowed from the *Germania* of Tacitus, as well as from Einhard.¹³² These borrowings are catalogued by August Wetzels, who, in his 1881 study of the *Translatio*, thoroughly and conveniently made note of the major echoes between Rudolf, the *Germania*, Einhard’s *Vita Caroli Magni*, and Adam of Bremen.¹³³ A direct link between the *Germania* and the Middle Ages thus appears to be limited to a single author.

Rudolf of Fulda’s *Translatio*, a work in fifteen parts, almost alone locates the *Germania*, or portions of it, in the early Middle Ages. In part two, Rudolf quotes from four short chapters of the *Germania*, that is chapters four, nine, ten, and eleven.¹³⁴ Chapter four of the *Germania* is quoted virtually in full and describes the physical characteristics of all the tribes of Germany (every last German has blue eyes, red hair, and a huge body) as well as the purity of their race.¹³⁵ The portion quoted of chapter nine describes the Germans’ human sacrifices and their worship of nature gods.¹³⁶ The portion quoted of chapter ten describes their

practice of divination, augury, and trial by combat. In this quotation, Rudolf intriguingly excises Tacitus' sentence containing the phrase "rex vel princeps civitatis" ("the king or chief of the people," or, less technically, "the king or count of the city"). He later changes another instance of "civitatis" to "populi." By doing so, Rudolf may have duplicitously emphasized what he apparently perceived to be the barbarity of the German system of government, an implication which would naturally be compromised by leaving unchanged the term "civitas."¹³⁷ The thirteen words of Tacitus' chapter eleven which appear next in the *Translatio* note that the people convene their assemblies at the full moon or new moon, thinking the time particularly auspicious. As Rudolf makes clear in section three which follows, this helps to exemplify the ferocious, perfidious, and demonic nature of the Germans.¹³⁸ Clearly, Rudolf is not as laudatory towards the Germans as Tacitus, and the laudatory tone of the *Germania* is therefore not shared by the sole medieval attestation to the *Germania*'s antiquity.

But we in the twenty-first century are better informed about the text of the *Germania* than any Anglo-Saxon was. We are able to take a more complimentary, but no less primitivist a view of the ancient Germans than Rudolf's readers. In the fifteenth-century edition of the *Germania*, Tacitus describes the rough land and conditions under which the hearty Germans live. Although typically lazy, they are fiercely dedicated warriors (ch. iv and xlv).¹³⁹ They are barely armored (ch. vi); fight with wooden spears more often than with iron (ch. vi); are loyal to their leader to death (ch. vii and xiv); and are moral (ch. xix), open, plain, honest (ch. xxii), religious (ch. ix), and chaste until marriage (ch. xviii). Their kings are chosen from royal blood, while their war leaders are chosen for strength and virtue (ch. vii). Tacitus describes, among others, the Aestii who collect amber even though they have no use for it or for its luxury (ch. xlv), and the Chauci who surprisingly (and perhaps uniquely in untold millennia of human civilization) know no greed, lawlessness, robbery, or offensive war (ch. xxxv; compare Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi*). There is no usury among the Germans, no fences, no pomp at funerals (compare Beowulf's funeral). Their decisions are made as if in a senate, discussing without cunning what is to be done (ch. xi). Next to their exemplary honesty and simplicity, the Germans are uncommonly brave. The Germans hold war and valor in such regard that even their women and children play an important part (ch. vii and viii).¹⁴⁰ They are, in short, everything Romans of Tacitus' day are not—save of course, for their lack of Roman temperance.¹⁴¹ Simon Schama describes perhaps an oversimple but roughly applicable binary: "wood against marble; iron against gold; fur against silk; brutal seriousness against elegant irony; bloody-minded tribalism against legalistic universalism."¹⁴² While this division fails to account for far more complex currents of cultural origins, in general, Tacitus and his resulting German identity have formed the most powerful undercurrent of Anglo-Saxon studies, one which oppose Germanic naturalism to Roman urbanity. This

current has shaped contemporary assessments of Anglo-Saxon literature, and so-called Germanic literatures in general.

In the end, the *Germania*, unless used with caution and circumspection, is inappropriate evidence for an accurate description of an Anglo-Saxon society nearly a millennium its senior.¹⁴³ One must bear in mind that Tacitus' *Germania*, while at times consistent with some current archaeological evidence, nevertheless idealizes Europe in 98 A.D., almost four hundred years before the invasion of Britain and therefore of the formation of Anglo-Saxon society. The *Germania* concerns continental barbarians, not Anglo-Saxons, which Tacitus described well before "a set of ostensibly new major confederations, such as the Franks, Saxons, Danes and Goths, emerge in the late second/early third centuries."¹⁴⁴ In other words, not only is Tacitus an inappropriate source for Anglo-Saxons, he is an inappropriate source for the Saxons.¹⁴⁵ Tacitus wrote before the production of any national barbarian histories, before the widespread development of complex border societies and vast trade and cultural interchange between Romans and barbarians, before the codification of barbarian law codes, before the wane of Roman imperial power, and before local Roman administrative systems were ceded to natives. Tacitus wrote the *Germania* about eight to fourteen years after Matthew wrote his Gospel, when Christianity was still relatively confined to the eastern Mediterranean; obviously well before the Christianization of the Empire; before the Romans left Britain; and before a Goth, Theodoric, became the first Germanic Emperor of the World. Also, one cannot help but conclude from the lack of manuscript evidence that Tacitus' view of the Germans was not especially valued by ethnographers of the early Middle Ages. As for the Anglo-Saxons, Levison states simply, "The works of Tacitus were unknown in medieval England."¹⁴⁶ According to Helmut Gneuss' list of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, neither Tacitus nor Rudolf of Fulda was available in England.¹⁴⁷ Even though the *Germania* is echoed in Rudolf of Fulda, a number of purportedly Germanic institutions, such as Tacitus' *comitatus* or *pagus*, are not described.¹⁴⁸ Brenda Bell explains, "Foreign history and habits had no intrinsic appeal except in so far as they related to Rome's own."¹⁴⁹ It is folly to imagine that Tacitus was a disinterested anthropologist recording Germanic social institutions for posterity. The *Germania* is like an origin myth, powerfully expressing racial desire in spite of fact, and producing a distorting glass through which we see Old English literature darkly.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY INFLUENCE

To reconstruct in part the contemporary origin myth of Anglo-Saxon literature (often portrayed as a Germanic institution molested by Christian monks), we first need to turn to nineteenth-century models of race. Their legacy largely organizes the bodies of evidence we query—or, to invoke a previous metaphor, they provide

a filter through which we see Anglo-Saxon ethnicity. Intellectually, the British Empire, the German Reich and the French Republic offered an environment steeped in presumptions of racial descent and Darwinian models of biological selection. Attempts to trace the origins of cultural institutions as one might trace the origins of species are illustrated in French revolutionary discourse that, for example, claimed institutional authority by virtue of the antiquity of the Gauls. According to this model, apparently unencumbered by evidence, it was the Gauls whose cultural and institutional purity was usurped by the Germanic Franks, and the ancient Gauls were held up as a model for authentic French culture.¹⁵⁰ Antiquity provided an uncorrupted origin, sought for by such eminent scholars as August Vilmar¹⁵¹ and Francis B. Gummere, the latter of whom begins a work on Germanic origins by “working backwards, up the stream of national descent”¹⁵² In Germany, Tacitus’ *Germania* provided similar inspiration for uncovering Germanic institutions, notwithstanding the historical anomalies its use generated. Germans in the nineteenth century, according to Patrick Wormald, also sought “a primal ‘Germanic’ law.”¹⁵³

Philologists had, after the declaration by Sir William Jones in 1786 of a proto-language underlying Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek, rightly assumed a relationship between Germanic languages. (Earlier scholars had invented a single European people called the Scythians, barbarian sons of Japheth.¹⁵⁴ And a single language was perhaps too compelling a quality to deny this imagined people.¹⁵⁵) During the course of the nineteenth century, an originary linguistic unity gave rise to a notion of a spiritual, ethnic, and cultural unity, what would later be called a *Kulturnation*.¹⁵⁶ Employing Tacitus to evince the cultural unity and autonomy of the German people, those claims to an ideal and pure *Kulturnation* took their paradigmatic modern shape in a lecture to the German Anthropological Institute by Gustav Kossina in 1885.¹⁵⁷ Although Kossina seems to have given it the form in which it would continue on into the twentieth century, he was reflecting a wider desire to imagine an autonomous Germanic aesthetic relevant to the people as a whole, *das Volk*.¹⁵⁸ Kemble studied in this climate and asserted in his own work an almost absolute Germanic cultural autonomy. So did his famous teacher, Jacob Grimm, as well as August Vilmar, and J.P.E. Greverus who wrote in mid-century of “a national character which through a predominant inclination typical of all Germans to this day to lead their family life apart, has preserved them from the influence of foreigners on their language and customs.”¹⁵⁹ Greverus writes of the Anglo-Saxons that “the British, softened by Roman culture and vice, had nothing for which the mighty sons of nature could respect them.”¹⁶⁰ A belief in the unsullied autonomy of Germanic culture, although not of an essential Germanic character, can be found to a lesser degree in E.A. Thompson’s *The Early Germans* of 1965, an influential study in the degradation of Germanic communal pastoralism from Cæsar to Tacitus. But, Carleton Huntley Hayes has cautioned that nineteenth-century scholars “have credited to the primitive Germans a curious

utopian government and a marvelous agrarian socialism.”¹⁶¹ Not untypically, James Cruikshank Roger writes in 1889, “Let him who will deduce his origin from the shiftless savage of the British Isles, I am content to believe myself of that great Teutonic stock, which has ruled the world in the past, and will rule it to the end of time.”¹⁶² These sentiments will be echoed forty years later in Nazi theories of the *Nordleute* (Nordic race).¹⁶³ This racial, cultural, economic, and linguistic isolation is behind a powerful idea of social progress, known as social Darwinism, which formed a pillar of Hitler’s education system,¹⁶⁴ and is still significant in twentieth-century assessments of the Anglo-Saxon past.

Eric John loosely calls these more extreme Germanophilic contentions a “Germanist position,” although an assumption of collective autonomy seems generally to be a consistent feature of historiography, and not particular to Germany. Isidore of Seville, as only one example, classed races not only by clothing, but by physical type, implying that racial autonomy was bred in the bone.¹⁶⁵ One major divide which results from nineteenth-century race theory is the distinction between Germanic and Roman characteristics (another, of course, is between Germanic and Celtic). The influence of various races on the English temperament and on English society was the subject of much interest at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁶ In 1874, Bishop Stubbs in his *Constitutional History* distinguished two discrete systems of political organization in England, a Germanic one before 1066, and a Norman one after 1066. Relying heavily on Kemble’s study of Anglo-Saxon England, and perhaps thinking of the largely Catholic French Republic, Stubbs understood the Norman system to include involuntary bonds of fealty, while the German system included the voluntary relation “of subject to sovereign,” a bond of loyalty we also see Kemble stressing.¹⁶⁷ This is possibly at odds with the historical record, which describes, among other things, a significant slave population in Anglo-Saxon England—one wonders how voluntary such a condition can be.¹⁶⁸ Stubbs considered the pre-Conquest English system to be essentially that described by Tacitus, hence the reliance by Stubbs and later Germanists on the *Germania*.¹⁶⁹ Stubb’s distinction was echoed in Round’s *Feudal England* (1895), Vinogradoff’s *Villainage in England* (1892), Maitland’s *Domesday Book and Beyond* (1898), and S.J.Crawford’s *Anglo-Saxon Influence on Western Christendom 600–800* (1933), among others.¹⁷⁰ The ties to Germanic culture were not only political, but also purportedly biological. For example, Crawford writes that even in the ninth century, the Anglo-Saxon “invaders had never forgotten the ties which united them with the continental Teutons.”¹⁷¹ Perhaps not, but one needs to be wary of assuming a homogenous Teutonic culture, since the notion of a *gens teudisca* came into existence only under the Carolingians, and then perhaps only as an invented product of nostalgia or as a linguistic, not a cultural, designation.¹⁷² An unrealized image of a single German people may have existed very early on in Anglo-Saxon England, as might be suggested by Bede, for example, but if it did, it was derived

ultimately from Roman historiography.¹⁷³ The precise composition of the Germans—that is, who was and who was not German—certainly shifted throughout the period. In fact, as I argue below, King Alfred took advantage of these shifts to contextualize Anglian and Saxon identities along Carolingian models. The persistent critical autonomy of Germanic culture depends upon a belief in the autonomy of a German race—if such a thing exists beyond its more recent historiographical expression.

The correlative idea of *ein deutsches Volk* finds its contemporary articulation in late nineteenth-century German and Austrian history, where it is understood as describing a people as a political and cultural singularity. Again, Tacitus helps to link poetry and *Volk*. In his monumental and influential study, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Gustav Ehrismann cites Tacitus as evidence that a single people records its history in epic song.¹⁷⁴ By the late eighteenth century, *Volk* was commonly imbued with connotations of homeland, or *Heimat*, and tribe. Even the proto-Germanic language, now tied to a proto-Germanic race, was seen as originating in a Nordic homeland.¹⁷⁵ During a long period of political fragmentation in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, *Volk* and *Heimat* were used as “an organizing ideology for people quietly seeking a haven from the uncertainties of modern life.”¹⁷⁶ A search for authenticity in the mountains and valleys of Germany was a response to a perceived decline in social values. Intellectuals like Paul Ernst, Adolf Bartels, and Friedrich Leinhard sought to celebrate the *Volksseele*, or peoples’ soul. Bartels, assuming a correspondence between the nation and its *Volk*, wrote in 1910, “The literature of today knows no point of view other than the national: what is detrimental to the national...must be opposed.”¹⁷⁷ The importance of the notion of *Volk* to the apparatus of the German state is illustrated by the 1941 *Der Volksbegriff im Sprachschatz des Althochdeutschen und Altniederdeutschen*, a work used for civil service cultural training by the Third Reich. In it, Günter Herold explores with impressive acuity the various meanings of the word *Volk* and its reflexes from its appearance in the *Hildebrandslied* to its various manifestations in more recent sources.¹⁷⁸ In keeping with historical models inherited from Grimm and others, Herold considered the term to have accrued a political meaning by the ninth century, and ultimately a cultural and spiritual meaning as well.¹⁷⁹ The metaphor of blood-related family and soil was employed in extending the connection between the literature of the *Volk* and its *Heimat*. Robert Faesi, for example, ends his 1933 study of German poetry with verse entitled “Heimat” which celebrate mother earth and the fatherland as the source of ethnic genius.¹⁸⁰

It is important to stress that this is not merely a modern phenomenon. Malcolm Todd argues that the idea of a *deutsches Volk* actually begins to arise after the publication in 1470 and 1473 of Tacitus’ *Germania*, which “encouraged the rise of a nationalistic approach to the interpretation of the ancient past.”¹⁸¹ Forests, soil, and Germanic blood were idealistically set against Roman and popish

urbanity (and later, British imperialism) to provide a long-lived discourse of Germanic naturalism and race.¹⁸² These images eventually coalesced into the idea of *Germanentum*, in its extreme “the idea of a biologically pure and inviolate race, as ‘natural’ to its terrain as indigenous species of trees and flowers.”¹⁸³ As King Alfred illustrates in the ninth century, monastic historians in the eleventh, and National Socialists in the twentieth, the search for racial authenticity takes place most often among historical documents. Antiquity authorizes cultural phenomena, perhaps since, in the metaphor of growth, it suggests a primitive and naïve past, a childhood contiguous with but unsullied by the deprecations and cynicism of age.¹⁸⁴

A common culture of expression, an ethnic expression which reaches back into history, includes a sense that a people shares a defined body of song or poems—a national or tribal oeuvre which records and expresses its *Geist*, or spirit. In the nineteenth century, what may or may not have been actually relevant to such a *Geist* were collected under the rubric of a common German identity. This is one of the cultural origins of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, for example, and of the collected folktales of the brothers Grimm.¹⁸⁵ Konrad Köstlin reminds us of the slogan, “Folklore verbindet die Völker,” which implies that in a common store of stories can be found a clear sense of one’s self as it is construed from a collective ethnic tradition.¹⁸⁶ It follows from the assertion of such an identity that it is through a corpus of poetry, ethnically delimited, that the traditions of a people are passed on, as Andreas Heusler argued.¹⁸⁷ By way of illustration, it is no surprise that during the last century’s periods of exaggerated nationalism, the Austrian ethnographic series *Quellen und Forschungen zur deutschen Volkskunde* offered a study of German “Volkslieder,” or people’s songs (the English term “folk song” has virtually lost its association with the metaphor of the folk).¹⁸⁸ Gummere introduces his discussion of Germanic virtues by writing, “The heroic legends of Germany will help us in this respect; for here shine in a setting of poetry the ideals of the race itself.”¹⁸⁹ The law, too, spoke to this unified, racial spirit; Jakob Grimm’s *Rechtsalterthümer* (1828), according to Wormald, “was born of a belief that a people’s law was inlaid in its spirit (*Geist*) and endowed with a commensurate potential for immortality. It would therefore find some ubiquitous expression as folk-tales.”¹⁹⁰ Perceptions of cultural autonomy inform a largely unquestioned sense of the transhistorical existence of *Volkslieder*, and imply by extension a group of songs somehow continually evocative of an ethnic or national *Geist*, a literary canon which speaks culturally and legally on behalf of a national community.¹⁹¹ Similarly, the discourse of English literature today finds its national origins in a racially defined model of a people’s common voice.

Old English poetry, insofar as Anglo-Saxon England is imagined to have been autonomously Germanic, partakes of this putatively distinct Germanic folk-poetry. Poems written hundreds of years apart are often treated together, as if the passage of centuries could not erase some essential *Geist*.¹⁹² Biblical paraphrases

and riddles are treated by some critics as equally evocative of a Germanic spirit, liberated entirely from the influence of Latin generic categories.¹⁹³ In this approach, one is left only to induce the relative worth and effect of particular texts in light of a racially delimited corpus and with respect to an imprecise sense of racial inheritance. Thus does the study of Old English literature, as a specific category of English literature, rely on a governing discourse of race. And to the degree that Old English is seen as the origin of more recent English literature, ethnogenesis may well set respected if unarticulated boundaries of an English literary tradition.

VOLKSLIEDER

The idea that a literary tradition somehow memorializes and monumentalizes national culture is not new to English curricula, nor confined to the academy. Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* and the antagonism it provoked in the United States among *literati* seem to have been inspired in part by a prevailing sense that literature memorializes and sets the limits of culture. The argument presumes that those admitted to the canon set the boundaries of American literature, and thus of the *Geist* that will be inherited. Literature, it follows, does not speak *to* an audience, as much as it speaks *on behalf* of a people or collective. Literature's role is construed as an embassy, as a people's voice, which inspires ardent investment in controlling the lists of a canon. What is at stake is the very *Volksgeist*, or tribal spirit, assumed to live in the literary canon. This appears to be a major concern to David Wallace. As mentioned earlier, his preface introduces a new selection of literary artifacts in response to current racial demographics. Apparently, as Britain loses or abandons her dominating sense of Englishness, so will she lose or abandon the "totalizing claims" of a unitary narrative drawn from the history of her literature. Literature as illustration of a national *Geist* is at issue. England's ethnic incoherence, in other words, is responded to by a correlative incoherence in the organization of her inherited *Volkslieder*. In this model, race and literature are inextricable and homologous, even as this racial incoherence is illustrated according to principles of selection which are themselves racially delimited. The ethnic constitution of Britain today thereby delimits the institutional manifestation of "Medieval English Literature." What one sees in Wallace's anthology is not properly *medieval English*, but selected documents of sufficient antiquity which authorize or elaborate upon a contemporary sense of English ethnic identity. The terms are the same, but their referents are changed. Wallace's narrative thus authorizes ethnic origins in a literary past, validates modern ethnic identity through an ethnically defined literary past, and gives antique voice to a new collective.

And yet the *Volksgeist* which characterizes the culture we know as AngloSaxon England lives on only through a consistent interpretation of its records. The Anglo-Saxon literary corpus—the bulk of the recoverable cultural expression of the *Volk*

—is fashioned as a subplot or chapter within a larger story of English literature. But there is a distinction being made here without a difference. To say that culture is expressed through texts seems to assume that culture exists beyond its textual articulation, that there is some Culture beyond its expression—as if Culture were a Platonic form that occasionally took terrestrial shape in oral or written communication.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, I am not convinced that culture can be distilled from books simply because I am not convinced in the independent existence of Culture. Books exist, are copied, excerpted, cited, quoted, and collected, but what is in them does not exist independently of them—although books can inspire reinterpretations in oral or visual form, and *vice versa*. As an analogy, I cannot imagine how to begin comparing a B-flat made by a piano with a B-flat made by a saxophone, except to compare the relative phonic qualities of saxophones and pianos. B-flats do not exist for us except as productions of instruments; although this is *not* to say that the conditions for reception (air currents, sound wave oscillation, ears, etc.) do not exist independently of the act of reception. However ethnicity might have been expressed orally or in the plastic arts, ethnicity is not distinct from the text that generates it.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, there may not be a direct connection between what is implied by extant poetry and the selves of Anglo-Saxons. One cannot assume that to Anglo-Saxons, poetry was reflective of an ideal, imagined culture or society.¹⁹⁶ Poetry may well have served different social functions, such as being a site for philosophical contemplation, for moral suasion, for theoretical experimentation, for memory, and so on.¹⁹⁷ One might assert at best only an indirect affective relation between poetry and individuals.

Racial identity, to put it simply, belongs more to the world we imagine than to the world we observe, if this binary will be momentarily permitted.¹⁹⁸ The imagined world of books is sometimes called a “fictional world.” It is, in the words of Ruth Ronen, “a world having its own distinct ontological position, and...a world presenting a self-sufficient system of structures and relations.”¹⁹⁹ But we are also concerned with how texts and their fictional world relate to readers. At issue is the epistemological relation between literature and an audience capable and willing to adopt its claims. There are a number of critical approaches that have taken up this question—including cultural studies, Marxism, and new historicism, among others. What all of these approaches have in common is that they see within a text traces of the culture which produces it. The epistemology here is not mitigated, but direct—as canny objects of social forces, enlightened critics can know the world directly (“unmask” it) and thus reveal those forces to unwitting subjects. Apparently, ideology can be suspended while its effects are revealed, implying an objective world beyond phenomena. Texts therefore purportedly register cultural assumptions, figures of a shared ideology or *Geist*. But there are two important difficulties, and perhaps more. First, one is asked to assume that an author is speaking widely and representatively of a culture in all his or her idiosyncrasies. It is a decidedly Marxist move to make the literary more

ambiguous, to allow its categorical entropy, such that an author represents (as a social subject) a collective rather than speaks (as a poet) potentially or poorly on behalf of an audience. That critical move largely ignores the varied quality of representation, on which must depend the quality of social critique. Moreover, one is asked to suppose that a *Geist* infuses all social subjects (authors, bishops, farmhands, criminals) equally.²⁰⁰ That doctrine is contrary to the modality of literary discourse, as opposed to an indicative discourse. This raises a second point. The communication registered in texts is not direct: there is a fundamental boundary between literary text and audience which suspends the formative or instrumental activity of these texts on audiences.²⁰¹ This boundary is the affirmation of a text's implicit or explicit assertions by a reader. A reader may choose not to affirm a story's ethical or social claims—in fact, it is only through a lack of affirmation that critique would be possible. Thus, the relation between text and audience (that is, the production of textual culture) is modal or possible—not yet affirmed, but possibly so. A literary text offers an audience a possible world, “other possible states of affairs,” which may or may not be acceptable to an audience.²⁰² Literature, like ethnic identity in textual culture, is only instrumental if it is allowed to affect its reader, or descriptive if it is adopted canonically by readers. Individuals are unrepresented by literature they do not allow to speak on their behalf. The *culture* of textual culture is therefore the entirety of possible worlds expressed in texts, but not necessarily the *culture* adopted by an audience (since the modality of literary texts ultimately allows readers a choice in the matter).

Modal fictional discourse plays a large part in the models according to which identity is formed. And here the binary between what is observed and what is constructed breaks down. Paul Ricoeur argues, “Through fiction and poetry new possibilities of being-in-the-world are opened up within everyday reality.”²⁰³ This opening-up is not a creating, because possibilities exist only *in potentia*. For example, in the Old English poem known as “Resignation,” the narrator says, I “mine sawle bebeode ond mines sylfes lic,/ond mind word ond min weorc...ond *þa* manigfealdan mine gepohtas” (l. 6a-9b, “offer my soul and likewise my self, and my words and my works...and the multiplicity of my thoughts”). The conjuncted terms pose a possible conception of the self as partitioned into a soul, a self, works, words, and thoughts. To someone who does not conceive of the self as partitioned in this way, the narrator's offering permits (but does not necessitate) a new view of the subject. This is not to say that there can be a view which is not constructed, only that various constructions compete for wider acceptance. As this example helps to demonstrate, fiction is modal, proposing possible or contingent redescriptions and recreations of the things we sense around us. If a reader chooses to accept such a partition of the self, then that is how the reader perceives the self to be partitioned. If the reader does not accept such a partition of the self, then its literary record is not transparent to any social reality.

In terms of identity, then, fiction contributes to an enabling *mythos*, a cultural paradigm of *possible* self-definition. An “understander of fiction,” in Ronen’s accurate phrase, is affected by this possibility, opened to new options, insofar as he or she affirms or denies its applicability to himself or herself.²⁰⁴ Possible worlds are therefore more than self-contained complexes of autonomous discourses into which a reader enters unencumbered: they are, according to G.W.Bowersock, “*part of something larger*,” an entire world of correlative possibilities.²⁰⁵ Fiction manages a framework of suspended identities, possible identities which can offer individuals, in the words of Hayden White, a “meaningful relation to the social formations in which they are indentured to live out their lives and realize their destinies as social subjects.”²⁰⁶ Fiction thus proposes matrices of possible identity capable of reconfiguring the perceived relationship between individuals in a community. Insofar as narratives of ethnogenesis are fictional (versus factual), they, too, are capable of reconfiguring the relationship between members of a community or between communities. Walter Pohl writes, “The most common form of ethnically significant texts are narratives (especially *origines gentium*). Recent research on the ‘fiction of fact’ can lead to a better understanding of the way in which narratives shaped the self-perception and perception of ethnic groups.”²⁰⁷ It seems to me that they can only do so by suspending before an audience possible worlds of ethnic identity.

Some of these possible worlds are more germane to Anglo-Saxon poetry than others, and some are clearer than others; for example, John Hill has described with great detail the cultural world of the poem *Beowulf*.²⁰⁸ Hill’s important study demonstrates that certain cultural characteristics may be important for understanding the world of the poem (they may help to explain a character’s action or mythic origin, for example), while at the same time they may be unimportant or unfamiliar to actual Anglo-Saxons. In other words, the possible world of a text demands a distinction between social culture (or the material expression of a people) and literary culture (or the models, methods, and metaphors of its possible expression). Any explication is in the end applicable directly and exclusively to the text, and only obliquely to the community from which it originates. Whatever may be said of *Beowulf*’s *comitatus* (the term is not in the poem) does not necessarily explain the intricacies of military organization in Anglo-Saxon England, even while the *comitatus* seems to apply to the states of affairs in the poem itself.

As a more specific example: an East Anglian in the year 991 A.D., finding himself rendering service to a local *fyrð* gathered against an invading viking²⁰⁹ fleet, may or may not have been familiar or conversant with the traditions of the *comitatus* as described by Tacitus in the first century A.D. But one fictional East Anglian, Ohthere, in a poem entitled *The Battle of Maldon* seems to be portrayed in light of those traditions. Asserting that the motivations of a fictional East Anglian necessarily draw upon the actual cultural vocabulary of actual Anglo-

Saxons seems to me to ignore the (howsoever subtle but nevertheless essential) distinction between the worlds described in poems and the world of everyday life. Such an assertion also denies the possibility of cultural illiteracy, the possibility that the cultural vocabulary evident in Anglo-Saxon books may be exclusive to literate Anglo-Saxons of a certain social status. And once that possibility is allowed, one needs to ask whether *Volkslieder* affect the identity of an entire *Volk* or whether they are proposed only to a particular class of readers.²¹⁰ If to the latter, then we also need to ask whether at any given point we are looking not at some communal, Hegelian *Geist*, but at an exclusive literary fashion. Here one can divide the voice of a race (its *Volkslieder*), which is presumably expressive of its *Volksgeist*, from textual culture, which may or may not be confined by barriers of race and class.

VOLKSLIEDER AND IDENTITY

At the end of the Old English poem “Wulf and Eadwacer,” the unidentified speaking voice addresses (what may be) her absent love with the lament, “þæt mon eape toslite þætte næfre gesomnad wæs/uncer giedd geador” (“That men so easily put asunder that which was never united/our song together”). *Giedd* can refer to a song or lyric, a poem, a saying, a proverb, a riddle, a story, a narrative, an account, or a speech, among other things.²¹¹ In breadth of meaning, it resembles our postmodern word *text*. *Giedd* is a term whose precise meaning will always be beyond our articulation, as the song of unity seems beyond the articulation of the poem’s speaking voice. The speaking voice implies that happiness would have been hers had the *giedd* of her absent love and herself been brought harmoniously together: *uncer giedd geador*. The fragmented *giedd* in “Wulf and Eadwacer” might be read as a metaphor of the textual culture of Anglo-Saxon England. Narratives, stories, poems, and lyrics are all associated in a largely unexamined way with groups of people, with some *us* together, whether these groups be nations or tribes or artists or critics or, in the case of “Wulf and Eadwacer,” lovers. The speaker of “Wulf and Eadwacer” announces that there exists some unifying *giedd* which belongs to her lover and herself, a *giedd* that has been fragmented by others and whose power has therefore been lost to the two lovers. The story is theirs; not only does it belong to them, but it also expresses something about them together. But how can this song identify them or unite them as members of a community—even a community of two? How does it translate and transfer cultural information? How does it affect or effect identity?

Of course, there are a number of objections that might be raised here, not least among them the nature of things said to have identity, whether they are necessarily only bodies, whether one can speak sensibly of groups having identity, and what effect notions of racial types have on distinguishing groups. With respect to observed characteristics, one might especially wonder what exactly it is that carries

identity across generations, since particular individuals are not coeternal with historical identity. One answer has already been suggested. The few trans-generational vehicles of cultural memory include texts and oral tradition (or language itself), which lends weight to the supposition that a culture can be contained in and by a body of a people's poetry, or *Volkslieder*.²¹² This raises a related issue, which takes us from this particular aspect of identity to another. Michael Durrant, in his critique of John Locke's foundational definition of identity, takes issue with the argument that equating the identity of a thing with itself can be expressed as "comparing two states of a thing at different times."²¹³ By this expression, one would assume that one is comparing changed states of a thing, and therefore assuming the continuity of the thing itself. One would have to assume the independent existence of things, groups, objects, and texts beyond their identification in language. In a slightly different form, this is one of the fundamental concerns of early medieval philosophy: the relation of substance (the substratum of a thing itself) to accidents (its observed characteristics).

For example, does a group which we call "Anglo-Saxon" in the age of Bede exhibit the same ethnic characteristics as a group we call "AngloSaxon" in the ages of Alfred and Wulfstan? If so, then we need to ask whether we are merely observing two instances of a set of homologous characteristics (and a substratum is being assumed), or an actual and continuous tangible collective described twice. If the latter, then what is such a collective when it does not exhibit these characteristics—i.e., what is Anglo-Saxon exclusive of superficial material markers? For example, is Edward a Norman, as his haircut implies, or an Anglo-Saxon, as his angry brother claims? A manifestation of these reported markers in the textual record might also be the result of an archaizing fashion, as Roberta Frank has argued with respect to Germanic tradition in later Anglo-Saxon England.²¹⁴ The term "AngloSaxon" lends a false sense of continuity to the grouped individuals we are querying. It also implies a fundamental cohesion exclusive of and beyond a common set of material and textual characteristics. Ultimately, what can be distinguished are only similar characteristics, or, in logical terms, *accidents* or *qualities*) rather than the community itself.²¹⁵ In terms of Anglo-Saxons and race, if the self-expressed qualities of racial identity which pertain to Anglo-Saxons in 890 are identical with the self-expressed qualities of racial identity which pertain to Anglo-Saxons in 1014, then we can only assert that a similar *expression of race* exists. But if, as I contend, the expressed qualities have changed, then the "Anglo-Saxon" of the age of Bede is not the same as the "Anglo-Saxon" of the age of Alfred, and that whenever we speak of *their* stories, we are actually talking about two different *theys*. Moreover, the change itself is indicative of a shift in self-expressed political boundaries, in the *Volk* whose songs we group together. The shifts seems to be expansive; in other words, the *Volk* comes to include increasingly varied groups of people; it may also be that as expressions of ethnic identity multiply, they do so in response to a growing

uncertainty about material distinctions between ethnic groups. This suggests to me that the *Volkslieder* may not actually be a vehicle of cultural memory, but a static cultural fiction maintained to declare the borders of race at any given time. Rather than conveying culture across generations, the idea of *Volkslieder* may instead be a site for the contemporary production of literary and cultural tradition. In other words, we do not inherit a sense of race that is also reflected in a literary canon; we inherit (or create) a literary canon that demands and proposes a sense of race.²¹⁶

Such an instrumentalist possibility suggests itself when considered against larger issues; for example, one might ask whether self-expressed racial qualities feed a larger ideology, whether they proceed from a natural or constructed self, or whether they register epistemic matrices of power. It seems that with these questions, the assumption of a *volk* already precedes an interrogation of its development. A larger social and historical context is sometimes, as Isaiah Berlin notes, “logically prior to our investigations.”²¹⁷ Ethnic origins and racial particularity may derive not from any *fact* of race, but from the semantic demands of a matrix of metaphors, a model, locked in language and in books. This model creates race by directing epistemology. In other words, one can know the world ethnically because one can be compelled by the logic of language and difference to assert it thus. One of the difficulties with an epistemic view of culture is that culture and literature are often asserted as transgenerational inheritances, as Platonic forms existing and developing exclusive of their particular expression by particular individuals at particular times. The Cartesian paradigm which distinguishes bodies and minds inclines us to talk (and perhaps think) about literature as if it existed as an autonomous, external, and racially delimited corpus which grows untended with time. The force of this metaphor turns literature into a body (*corpus*), in space (external), and in time (grows, changes, fades, corrupts). And so we are invited to characterize this body linguistically as we might a human body—it has boundaries, a soul, an identity, a voice, and so forth. Our own difficulties reaching consensus on interpretation ought to alert us to the fact that texts do not contain a single and unified expression of common culture—something we apparently assume of older texts. Instead, texts require competent readers in each generation to discover them and to produce (or reproduce) out of them a variety of possible interpretations within which they have meaning. The variety of interpretations and the ensuing text, not the text *per se*, constitute textual culture. Textual culture is racialized insofar as we read it as a single, unified body through a filter of a single, unified people.

There is also an important religious filter to account for. Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis is very early on conflated with Christian ethnogenesis (by which all Christians are familial relations to Abraham), and the body of believing Christians in Anglo-Saxon England is often spoken of racially. Put this way, it seems a pagan ethnogenesis was extant prior to Christian influence among the Anglo-Saxons.

But to assume that there was an Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis in its current forms prior to the ingress of Christianity is already dangerously speculative. One could imagine, after all, that an ethnogenesis might have been constructed in direct response to the generic demands of Roman or Christian historical discourse. The narrative mechanisms of tribal origins were part and parcel of Roman historical and political thought, and formed the conventions by which tribal stories were reproduced. Although purely speculative, the possibility that tribal origins (not royal genealogies) were unknown to illiterate Saxons nevertheless allows that ethnogenesis was not always necessary to Anglo-Saxon identity. My response to this challenge is to treat ethnogenesis *per se*, rather than try to distinguish historically between types of ethnogenesis and their literary reflexes based on tribal exclusivity that may or may not have existed.

Evidence of political or ecclesiastical boundaries conflates with evidence of racial boundaries.²¹⁸ Thus the methods of inquiry into social identity, especially expressed allegiance, ought to be carefully distinguished. Social identity in its broader sense suggests what Sharon Macdonald isolates as an “allegiance to people, group and, often, place and past.”²¹⁹ My claim so far has been that literary culture does not necessarily express the characteristics of Anglo-Saxon identity—that is, actual social allegiances—but potential allegiances. An example will (I hope) demonstrate the difficulty. First, AngloSaxonists, usually on linguistic grounds, generally tend to diminish the Celtic, especially Welsh, presence in assessments of early medieval England. While there was certainly some Welsh influence, and therefore some Welsh component in actual social composition, some Anglo-Saxons expressed their difference from the Welsh in their name for them: *weahl*, or foreigner.²²⁰ In sometimes excluding the Welsh from their own expression of Anglo-Saxon community, Anglo-Saxon texts confess imagined allegiances, but not actual social ones in which Celts made up a portion of the population. The see of Lindsey at its creation by Theodore of Tarsus was populated mostly by *Scoti*, or Celts who had emigrated from Ireland. Yet, even though the *Scoti* were just as much *weahlas* to the Anglo-Saxons as the Welsh, for example, it is rare that we differentiate Lindsey in historical discussions from the rest of Anglo-Saxon England with the same degree of exclusion that we differentiate Welsh lands.²²¹ Perhaps because of a continued expression of the intimate familiarity of Lindsey to the English nation, Anglo-Saxonists are not prone to differentiate Lindsey historically or racially as one might Wales. Yet in both cases, long-standing maps of political boundaries also tend to prejudice an understanding of expressed Anglo-Saxon allegiances.

ETHNIE

We might imagine racial identity to be a function of a number of characteristics, among them language, lineage, geography, physical characteristics, a sense of

community, and so on. Some of these characteristics are, in an Aristotelian model, material, that is, they belong to the realm of what can be physically sensed—for example, physical features, geographic distribution, dress, decoration, and so forth. Other characteristics are formal, that is, they belong to the cognitive realm, to the realm of what can be thought (or, properly to my aims, what can be textually expressed)—for example, stories of origins, a language of community, expressions of a shared history, and so on.²²² Racial identity in Western discourse is ultimately a function of both formal and material elements. For the most part, academic debate over racial identity has divided along these lines, with some proposing the importance of formal elements, others the importance of material elements. Bridging this dichotomy is the term *ethnicity*, which connotes an ideal identity. The relation of an ethnic collective to its textual expression is a difficult one to articulate. Anthony Smith, whose 1986 *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* marks a watershed in the study of ethnogenesis, and who makes perhaps the clearest statement of the formal role of texts and myths in ethnicity, writes:

To turn a motley horde of people into an institutionalized nation, to give them a sense of belonging and identity, to unify and integrate them, to give them a sense of authenticity and autonomy and fit them for self-rule, all require a symbolic framework in and through which they can be mobilized and stabilized. This is just what the mythology of the past, and the poetry of nature, can provide. It enables leaders to set goals for the community by referring to the great era of heroism as a model of action and achievement. It gives the people a sense of anchorage and stability during a period of dislocation and upheaval. It confers upon often downtrodden populations a sense of their (former) dignity and antiquity; and it brings together disparate groups and classes into a solidary unit through its myth of common descent.²²³

This instrumentalist claim, from which I take my start but not my banner, stands in apposition to Benedict Anderson's constructivist claim concerning the relation of ethnic identity to textual expression, since Anderson's work, *Imagined Communities*, deals mainly with a narrative of identity forged almost exclusively from a relatively modern textual culture (especially print mass media).²²⁴

A brief comparison between Smith and Anderson's approaches may help to illuminate one important aspect of early medieval ethnicity. The most pressing difference between the two is that Anderson's work seems to proceed from a sense of post-Cartesian interiority, by which the individual allies the malleable and changeable self to an arbitrary order.²²⁵ Smith instead seems to take into account a profound sense of natural order which obtained before Descartes, by which an individual would generally have perceived himself or herself as naturally placed within an *ethnie*. For Anderson, in other words, a group might create a nation *ab*

ovo through imagination and will—an almost Nietzschean will to community; for Smith, at least insofar as the Middle Ages are concerned, a group does not create a nation as much as it articulates a naturally occurring mythological and familial past. The difference is important, since in Smith's view, certain stories of origins and a community's mythology become standardized by that community in the relative permanence of a historical record: "It is no accident that, in eras of relatively low literacy, monks and priests from Bede to the author of the Vladimir Chronicle in early Kievan Russia, act as chroniclers of the communal past."²²⁶ Communities, or rather *ethnie*, are built in Smith's view from an already articulated identity.²²⁷ This suggests that in the early Middle Ages, an ulterior motive does not create the textual nation; the motive instead is to express what is already perceived as the natural cohesion of a group (even though that expression may have convenient political consequences).

Anderson famously claims instead that nations are communities distinguished "by the style in which they are imagined," imagined because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellowmembers, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."²²⁸ Anderson considers the imagined nation a phenomenon possible only after the decline of Christendom, thereby making his observations of only marginal interest to the study of pre-Renaissance collectives. The nation of Anderson's reckoning, which enjoys relatively stable territorial demarcation, accounts to some degree in its imaginings for the various *ethnie* which comprise its population. And this is grounded for Anderson on the supposition that the order of the imagination is prior to or generative of the divine order medieval men and women saw operative in the disposition of their kingdoms and communities. Bluntly and broadly put, it appears to me more in keeping with the evidence under consideration to say that medieval people did not imagine communities, they explained them. Or, to paraphrase Albert Einstein, for most medieval people, God did not play dice with the disposition of *ethnie* and nations.²²⁹ Primarily because of its insensitivity to a pre-Cartesian sense of natural order, Anderson's work simply does not help to explain the stories of ethnogenesis of early medieval Europe as they are recorded and transformed in the historical record.

Both Smith and Anderson seek to understand the origins of modern nations. Their work is therefore colored by this organic or developmental teleology. Nevertheless, Smith introduces a useful term, *ethnie*, which is an attempt to step out of the chain of argument linking any given ancient community with its purportedly modern equivalent (whether as a radical discontinuity or an essential continuity). *Ethnie*, a French term inflected with sociological connotations, describes an "ethnic community and its symbolism." Smith bases his definition on a notion of identity by which he intends "a sense of community based on history and culture." Thus *ethnie* and *identity* are for Smith correlated in their dependence on common or shared stories, sentiments, and expressions of solidarity.²³⁰ The

difficulty in applying these distinctions to Anglo-Saxon England is that while we can trace in faint outline an apparent continuity of stories, sentiments, and traditions from Bede to Wulfstan, and while in a very general sense *Anglo-Saxon* describes a continuum, *Anglo-Saxon* and *English* do not allow for what seem to be substantial shifts in the interpretation of a common past. Thus, for my purposes, I employ Smith's *ethnie* only insofar as it helps to distinguish a collective ethnically, rather than, say, politically. The most important aspect of an *ethnie* for my purposes is that it is bounded by textual culture insofar as textual culture contains its stories, sentiments, and expressions of solidarity—what Smith calls its mythology, which is not the same thing as a collection of myths.

Mythology is an integral part of Smith's *ethnie*. The mythology which also binds an *ethnie* is constantly changing, and with it the composition of the tribe. Early Medieval tribal histories, though, exhibit a stylistic uniformity, itself based on Roman sources. This stylistic uniformity may mask political and social changes, intentionally affirming long-standing tribal identity rather than any recent tribal variation. Cassiodorus, for example, in his *Origo Gothica* puts these words in the mouth of Athalaric, "Originem Gothicam fecit esse historiam Romanam" ("he made the story of Gothic origins to be Roman history").²³¹ History was essentially a Roman genre. Thus Walter Pohl contends, "Roman rhetoric could be used to affirm the existence of a people as a distinct ethnic and political group."²³² Anglo-Saxons authors affirmed tribal distinction with Roman tools, designed in large measure to illustrate stability and continuity. Since these tools constitute most of what remains of an Anglo-Saxon historiographical ideology, the tribe will not open itself to investigation except as the possible and stable product of its stories. A Romanized record of tribal traditions formed the imagined boundaries of ethnic belonging. Any measure of tribal change would require us to pit bodies of physical evidence against the stability implied in the textual record.

Tribal laws, myths, and traditions seem to have melded with Christian ones very early on—in the Gothic and Burgundian kingdoms at least by the sixth century. No lodestone is capable of turning the lead of recorded medieval history into the gold of autonomous Germanic tribal identity, were such a thing to exist. But these myths seemed at the least to have been reflective of ethnic inclusivity and exclusivity. John Niles, in a discussion of myth and history in *Beowulf*, notes that myths

can do cultural work in their own time and place by projecting current ideology back into the past and associating it with founding figures. In a manner similar to myth, a heroic poem like *Beowulf* may have provided Anglo-Saxons with a model for current institutions of kingship and thaneship, a means of validating power relations among Saxons, Mercians, Danes, and other groups....²³³

Myths can authorize the ethnic exclusivity of Saxons, Mercians, Danes, and other groups—especially myths of origin, since racial exclusivity sets difference into the blood and marrow. Myths, cultural traditions, laws, shared perceptions, a single ruler: all these contribute to a sense of ethnic exclusivity to those who have access to all the relevant texts. It is our contemporary access to such a wide range of texts that permits a reconstruction of an ideal, or normative, reality. Thus in an articulation of tradition, origin, religion, and law as it reaches back into the past, there are certain contemporary preconceptions of inclusivity and exclusivity which inform the boundaries of *uncer giedd geador*. This means attending to the inclusion or exclusion at specific moments of Angles, Saxons, Goths, Picts, Irish, and Danes in the ethnic constitution of an audience as expressed in a given Old English or Anglo-Latin text.²³⁴

Of course, identity, or rather Anglo-Saxon identity, is a mercurial notion even under the best evidentiary conditions. We are also handicapped by the assumption that we are interrogating a society. Society itself is a nineteenth-century notion, and, as Roland Axtmann notes, “was conceived as a self-contained cluster of social relationships whose boundaries coincided with the territorial boundaries of the state; in effect, ‘society’ was constructed with reference to another concept, the ‘state.’”²³⁵ Thus, assumptions about an Anglo-Saxon society teeter on assumptions about the breadth of Anglo-Saxon political structures. We must take care in discussing English ethnic identity to recognize that Anglo-Saxon England was not always comprised of a matrix of somewhat homogenous polities roughly defined by political borders. And yet, my terminology with respect to the political confines of Anglo-Saxon ethnic identity is still unfortunately elastic. My hope initially was that the Latin terms which seem to have been much more definite—terms such as *gens*, *natio*, *provincia*, and *res publica*—would have done for English ones. But the reality is that the terms were often as elastic in the early Middle Ages as the English ones are today.²³⁶

FRAGMENTS

At a fundamental level, one of the issues involved in the literary expression of an *ethnie* is the tension between the one and the many, between the individual and the tribe, and between textual fragments and a united *giedd*. This tension often results in what Caroline Walker Bynum has described as “the human determination to assert wholeness in the face of inevitable decay and fragmentation.”²³⁷ A concern over this tension opens up inquiry into the process by which the variety of individuated particulars is collected into a whole. As Frantzen describes the fragments of evidence which are collected into narrative descriptions of origins, the progression is never one “from conflict to harmony,” but “a repetition of conflicts in different contexts.”²³⁸ Fragmentation is often seen as a problem which an unachievable unity will solve. An interpretation delivers

unity in a timely or historically specific manner, fights with other interpretations over fragments of evidence, and wields a store of authority and rhetorical practices. And it is precisely this conflict between interpretations which is at stake in the language of identity. Anglo-Saxons appear to have organized themselves into collectives, collectives which they themselves described, perhaps accurately, in their texts. Like the Franks, they employed fragments of their own history, including stories and documents—texts—to reproduce “their world from the scattered fragments of the past.”²³⁹ Their interpretations of these historical texts into a cohesive story of identity is a product not of historical deduction, but of the inductive imposition of an *ethnie*’s identity upon the very apparatus of interpretation. Their collective need for a transcendent narrative of ethnic unity, demanded by the textual culture in which their Christian faith was articulated, already interpreted the stories in their libraries before they had been read. Like the coastguard of *Beowulf*, Scriptural models of *ethnie* said to literate Anglo-Saxons, “Nu ic eower sceal/frumcyn witan” (“Now I must know your ancestry [*lit.* the kin from which you come],” ll. 251b–252a). And like us, Anglo-Saxon *literati* interpreted fragments of textual evidence in part to conjoin disparate individuals into a historically (that is, textually) justifiable collective, in metaphoric answer to the coastguard. Anglo-Saxon authors employed the fragments of the past to propose, according to dominant textual models, a story of their own mutual belonging.

Issues of religion and ecclesiastical organization naturally arise in discussions of these stories, since it is to the credit of the Church in many historians’ eyes that it was able to forge a single, English identity. Still, a variety of Christian churches rather than the Christian Church—as Eusebius’ singular term implies—tended to be the order of the day. Isidore of Seville’s “catholic faith” and Alfred’s “Cristendom” are examples of early medieval attempts to articulate a textual identity which might supersede widespread ecclesiastical fragmentation.²⁴⁰ Also, in accommodating itself to various indigenous, pagan traditions, apostolic Christian churches in early medieval Europe were undergoing a process of localization, what James C. Russell describes as the Germanization of early medieval Christianity.²⁴¹ Even in the paradigms of their Christian faith, Anglo-Saxons individuated themselves—that is, they found their collective and individual identity—within a sometimes contradictory framework comprising both their local pagan and increasingly local Christian traditions. The tensions and contradictions of this framework were reproduced in Anglo-Saxon textual culture, as Karen Jolly shows with respect to the Anglo-Saxon charms.²⁴² It therefore seems fruitless to seek a single, uncomplicated Anglo-Saxon identity, or to comb the past for a lost unity.

Combined with this more general expression of Christian identity is the more local expression of provincial (i.e., ecclesiastical *provincia*) identity and monastic identity, whether based on Benedictine or composite *regulae*. Important but

overwhelming to my project, they describe the infinitely complex relation between ecclesiastical and ethnic identity—Bede’s title, *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, suggests an intimate relation between peoples, *gentes*, and their church, *ecclesia*. This relation is nevertheless slowly being sketched in current studies of popular religion and monastic identity by scholars who are tilling this ground admirably well. Catherine Cubitt, for example, points to the importance of memory in monasteries for maintaining a collective sense of community. Patrick Geary, too, argues that collective memory, also evident in Church history, often “has been orchestrated...as a strategy for group solidarity.”²⁴³ Even in its more recent manifestations, the issue of identity, philosopher Charles Taylor writes, is invariably bound up in “frameworks which articulate our sense of orientation in the space of questions about the good.”²⁴⁴ Interpretations of self, as Taylor explains, always respond in some qualitative way to a moral or spiritual position. Thus the language of identity is always spoken in response to the language of morality. Recognizing what passes for an ethical ideal is the first, difficult step in assessing ethnic identity. Like our own, Anglo-Saxon textual culture is replete with the dialogue between identity and morality. In the stories they told themselves, Anglo-Saxons of a given generation offered to future generations ethnic and ethical narratives, and thus acted as agents in the perpetuation of their language of identity. This language is what the Vienna School of ethnogenesis terms the “kernel of tradition (*Traditionskern*).”²⁴⁵ Traces of the language of identity, an identifiable kernel of tradition, are perceptible in the array of myths and symbols employed by Anglo-Saxon authors as they struggled to understand who they were in relation to who they ought to be. As each new generation of Anglo-Saxons put the gods of their fathers into the cupboard, this struggle was continually renewed. In the following chapters, I examine some long-lived texts which propose ethnic identity to Angles, Anglo-Saxons, and Anglo-Normans. There seems not to have been a single ethnic identity expressed, but strata of competing identities, sometimes contradictory, sometimes consonant, and always expressed in moral relation to the divine scheme of salvation history.

CHAPTER TWO

The Election of the Angles

confitebor tibi in populis Domine et cantabo te in nationibus

—Psalm 107 (108):3¹

Perhaps the most important text to propose ethnic identity to the AngloSaxons and the English is the *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*HE*) of the Venerable Bede. Bede, monk of the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow and later doctor of the Catholic Church, finished this text in 731. It is not only the single most influential history of England, but also our best-written source on seventh-century England. Classed as history, the *HE* is today embedded in a generic context that, however helpful, commits us to selective methods of interpretation, ostensibly proper to historical works. Attending chiefly to causal or factual issues in the *HE*, presumably in pursuit of an objective reality, can keep us from considering the literary or symbolic measure of this narrative, and thus of its ethnic claims. Bede assessed this measure as a *vera lex historiae*, a true law of history, by which facts are ultimately at the service of (and sometimes changed by) spiritual truth.² Bede's approach to the interpretation (and production) of narrative generally indicates that his texts included, in their stylized evocation of spiritual truth, an important figurative sense. Indeed, Bede's interpretative methods suggest that learned readers of his *HE* expected his historical narrative both to engage a symbolic language and to reproduce allusively the traditional discourse of Christian faith. As Cassiodorus had made Gothic origins into Roman history, so does Bede make Anglo-Saxon origins into Scriptural history. Each Latin word and each carefully crafted image resonate against a long tradition of Latin textual culture, Scriptural commentary, and, most importantly for Bede, Scripture itself. Bede, teacher, author, and monk, not only read meticulously, but also wrote meticulously. In his Advent homily on Mark 1:4–8, Bede reminds his monastic brethren that one must look “meticulously at the distinction [involved in] the words” of the gospel.³ Bede presumably wrote his commentaries and his *HE* in a library whose shelves were stacked with the works of Augustine, Jerome, Isidore,

Gregory, and others. His *HE* was written to fit into those shelves, to respond to their order, and to take up or to modify their metaphors and their semantic systems.

The *HE* was composed, as Roger Ray pointed out twenty-five years ago, in the context of Bede's Scriptural commentary.⁴ Scripture provided Bede with the paradigmatic medieval historical narrative, and the Catholic commentary tradition offered Bede a way of understanding the role of history in the scheme of salvation. Although the past is comprised of events and persons and texts, Bede also understood the past to be indicative of a divine order—rational, numbered, and sometimes symbolic.⁵ A king's name, the number of vessels carried to a city, the height of a wall, the mention of a cloak—all offer themselves in a narrative as historical facts and as possibly significant of larger spiritual truths. More importantly, perhaps, Bede wrote at great length and with deep conviction about the role of priests and monks as spiritual teachers; and his historical work, equally with his commentaries, aimed at extending the franchise of his faith through teaching and scholarship. The possible coincidence of Bede's exegetical method and his curatorial view of historical narrative seems to be at work in the *HE*, a work intended ultimately to configure the *gens Anglorum*⁶ symbolically as God's new chosen people (although salvation is extended by Bede to some co-religionists). It is the salvation of the entire community that Bede seeks, and their communal identity as the elect must therefore first be established.⁷ He manages this in a number of ways, but I address three: the implied divine election of the Angles, the linguistic particularity of the Angles, and the racial particularity of the Angles.

Bede famously said in his preface to the *HE* that he writes in order "ad imitandum bonum auditor sollicitus instigatur" ("to urge the solicitous listener into imitating the good").⁸ His explicit aim is curatorial, "generalis curam"—from the Latin *cura*, care, devotion, or attention; those who teach or write are to some degree curates, taking pastoral care of a community. Though we may mine the *HE* for a factual history of early Britain, its author was first and foremost a priest, and its chief function was the demonstration of a *vera lex historiae*.⁹ To those unfamiliar with exegetical method, or whose experience of it has been colored by its wide application to late medieval literature by D.W. Robertson, history may appear an ordered collection of facts, insignificant of spiritual meaning.¹⁰ Bede's theological elaborations have struck more contemporary secular readers as sometimes fantastical, but they define Bede's method and what we may presume to be his expectations of his own readers.¹¹ The Church father Origen had written in his *Against Celsus*, "if anyone has the capacity, let him understand that in what assumes the form of history, and which contains some things that are literally done, yet it conveys a deeper meaning"¹² Augustine of Hippo, another (and perhaps the most influential) doctor of the Church, defines history as *sive divinitus sive humanitus gesta*, deeds effected by human or divine agency, and, like Origen, as revelatory of the divine plan.¹³ Bede, following Origen and Augustine, writes

in his commentary on the book of Ezra that certain spiritual implications of history are clear to the learned or skilled reader, *doctus*, and we must take care, *curabimus*, to elaborate them for the less learned.¹⁴ In fact, to Bede, it is the educated who are responsible for saving the rest of the collective, as he points out in his commentary on Tobias.¹⁵ Whether there is actually a spiritual meaning to medieval historical narrative or not, one cannot ignore the probability that these narratives were generally written so as to imply and read so as to infer a spiritual meaning. And it is in that meaning that Bede sketches the ethnic reaches of his voice.

ANGELS AND ANGLES

That Bede expects much of his learned readers is illustrated in Bede's version of the famous story where Pope Gregory the Great sees Angles for the first time. Here Bede will articulate racial difference in religious terms. The Angles held Gregory in particularly high esteem and traced their conversion to his missionary efforts (via Augustine of Canterbury) in 597 A.D., even though Roman Britain had seen Christianity hundreds of years earlier.¹⁶ Bede retells the story in *HE* II, i, as culmination of a longer obituary of Gregory (see appendix to this chapter). Current in Anglian oral tradition, the story was reputedly expressive of Gregory's *tam sedulam* ("earnest solicitude") for the salvation of the *gens Anglorum*, whom Bede calls *nostrae gentis* ("of our race").¹⁷ Bede's own racial identity as a Christian Angle is at stake in this origination story. Bede had recently written a commentary on Ezra, which describes the important relation between race (the Jewish people) and salvation (the Jewish faith), so one can be reasonably sure that Bede is alert to the salience of race in salvation history—the possibility of salvation is understood by early medieval Christians to be given to a community.¹⁸ The story as Bede tells it has Gregory in a Roman market when he sees two boys (*pueros*) for sale. He asks if they are heathens, and sighs on hearing they are, thus commenting on the disparity between their outward beauty and their inward error.¹⁹ When he is told they are called Angles, he says, "Good...they have the faces of angels, and such men should be fellow-heirs of the angels in Heaven."²⁰ There are a number of things to notice in Bede's careful choice of terms throughout the story; in this instance, Gregory calls the Angles *homines*, men, where earlier they were called *pueros*, boys. Gregory does not make men of boys, but widens his frame of reference in this moment of missionary zeal to include all Angles, thus implying his desire for the salvation of the entire Anglian race. This is not suggested in the earlier Whitby version of the story (see appendix), which notes that the Angles may have been either boys or youths, neither term equivalent to Bede's *homines*, meaning both men and the human race. Bede's description of the boys as slaves or chattel implies, again unlike the Whitby life, that Gregory is delivering the Angles from bondage. These larger implications, though, are rarely pursued.

Bede's story has been read literally for well over five hundred years. In 1551, John Bale used it to impugn Gregory with its implicit flirtatiousness.²¹ Bale made the not uncommon slur that unmarried Catholic clergy like Gregory, who looks to be lusting after the boys, had always been either "sodomites or lechers."²² If it has not been read as a moment of sexual slippage, the passage has been read as a language game, as a series of playful puns.²³ But Bede tells us quite clearly that this passage illustrates Gregory's sedulity. We might want to take Bede at his word, and begin with the assumption that Gregory is not insincerely playful with either meaning or innuendo. The libidinous implications are more recent, and possibly one effect of postmedieval cultural shifts. Protestant anti-Catholicism and critical primitivism in their more extreme forms may imagine a naïve and base clergy, and perhaps therefore fail to engage the knowledge assumed of learned Anglo-Saxon readers. Ancillary to a titillating reading may be the strong influence of the ninth-century Old English version of the story, which appeared as a result of King Alfred's efforts at translating important Latin books into English.²⁴ This version is the one most familiar to students of Old English literature, since it has appeared in most Old English grammars and readers. As students and scholars translate the Old English, they rarely engage the Latin tradition within which Bede's story was first shaped, its allusions set, and its terms chosen.

The boys or men are called *venustus*, handsome or beautiful; it is a term which in Latin connotes grace, charm, proportion, and harmony. Classical use of *venustus* is sometimes markedly sexual, but centuries later, it seems to generalize and to become roughly synonymous with *pulcher*.²⁵ In fact, physical beauty was often conceived of as indicative of something spiritual. We see Alcuin of York, Charlemagne's celebrated court scholar, using *venustus* to describe St Willibrord, an Anglo-Saxon cleric sent in 690 to convert the Frisians.²⁶ Bede's choice of terms here is important, since *venustus* appears only once in all of Latin Scripture. Genesis 29:17 describes Leah's sister Rachel, Jacob's favorite, and mother to Joseph, patriarch of the tribes of Israel. As a beautiful point of origin, she therefore stands in genealogical relation to Israel much as the Anglian boys do to the *ecclesia Anglorum*, the new Israel.²⁷ In his Homilies on the Gospels, Bede explains that Leah and Rachel signify the two lives which one may have in Christ: the temporal in which we labor, and the eternal in which we are charmed or drawn (*delectare*) by the contemplation of God.²⁸ In this scheme, one begins uncertainly, laboring in faith, unable like Leah to see clearly (her eyes are compared to those of an animal, and thus her sight is physical, almost bestial).²⁹ But, as Bede explains in his commentary on the Pentateuch, Rachel represents a potential knowledge of God's beauty, *pulcher*, for which *venustus* is a vehicle.³⁰ Alcuin, too, explains that beauty can lead to a right contemplation of God: beauty in men as in women, *venustus* or *pulcher*, is a vehicle for the contemplation of God.³¹ Boniface, the Anglo-Saxon missionary to the Germans, writes in a letter to his disciple Lull that *venustus* is even a kind of divine wisdom.³² Divinity is often implicit in the

ecclesiastical and Bedan use of the term. Bede relates that when Whitby's Abbess Hild dies, a *pulchraque rerum concordia*, a more beautiful harmony of events takes place (IV, xxiii). *Pulcher* signifies a kind of intelligible beauty which does not deny the sensuous, but exists as physical beauty's telos, its proper goal or perfected state.³³ Bede tells a story in the *HE* of a Mercian man who had a vision of two beautiful young men (*duo pulcherrimi iuvenes*) one of whom carried a thoroughly beautiful (*perpulcher*) white book, the book of good deeds. Here the corporal and the literary collaborate in an image of perfected beauty, notably of two young, *pulcher* men who, unlike Gregory's *venustus* Angles, have attained to the Book. Bede notes that the beautiful Angles led Gregory to contemplate the distinction between a physical beauty significant of God and an interior darkness equated with an absence of God. This is further implied, but more deeply set into a frame of Christian discourse, with the term *venustus*.

The boys are, according to Bertram Colgrave's suspect translation, of "fair complexion," *candidus corporis*. *Corpus* is a body or sensible matter, and only by association skin or complexion. And *candidus* is a dazzling white—used also in the Whitby version.³⁴ In Acts 10, an angel is described as *candidus*. Also *candidus* are the bridegroom in Canticles 5:5, and the Son of Man in Revelation 1:14. In the *HE* (V, xii), a Northumbrian man risen from the dead describes the "white-robed spirits" of Heaven as *spirituum candidatorum*. (*Candidus* is intriguingly the name of Gregory the Great's nuncio in Gaul.) Most importantly, Christ ascends to Heaven as *candidus*: "And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow" (KJV 9:2). If one were to accept Colgrave's translation, one would have to allow that when Christ ascended into Heaven, His complexion cleared up. These Anglian boys, Bede says through the term *candidus*, shine like holy angels. Holiness is sometimes portrayed as luminescent, and God's truth, according to Augustine, also shines.³⁵ Bede presumably chose the adjective *candidus* to emphasize the Anglian boys' potential salvation, or that of their race. Through this term Bede's Anglian readers hope to fulfill the promise of their angelic candidacy.

Neither do the boys have, as Colgrave suggestively translates it, "lovely hair," but *capillorum quoque forma egregia*. The *forma* of the hair refers in one respect to its style, typically among early Germanic tribes a physical sign of their tribal affiliation. It is *egregia*, outstanding, or perhaps unusual or unique.³⁶ Caesar had noted in the middle of the first century B.c. how the tribes of Kent wore their hair, *capilloque promisco*.³⁷ This is not lovely hair, but a foreign hairstyle. Furthermore, *egregia* denotes something remarkable or splendid. The term probably indicates a hairstyle worn only by Anglian nobility. But in another respect, there are Scriptural connotations to the description. *Pulcher* and *capillus*, beauty and hair, are famously associated in the Canticle of Canticles, a book on which Bede made a commentary not long before writing the *HE*. The bridegroom says of the bride in Canticles 4:1 that her eyes are like doves, *columbae*,³⁸ and that "capilli tui sicut

greges caprarum quæ ascenderunt de monte Galaad" ("your hair is like a herd of goats which ascends the mount of Gilead"). Bede, in his commentary on the passage, gives this image a spiritual significance, noting especially the act of ascent and comparing it to an achievement of purity. In the next verse, her teeth are compared to "greges tonsarum" ("a flock of shorn ewes"). The proximity of *greges* to *capillus* in both Canticles, and perhaps homophonically in the *HE* episode, is mildly suggestive, especially given Bede's important involvement with the commentary tradition of Canticles.

Apponius' *In Canticum canticorum*, describes plainly the received interpretation of these images: "In oculis, ut dictum est, duces populi christiani intelleguntur" ("With 'eyes,' it is said, is to be understood the leaders of the Christian people").³⁹ One might recall here that Leah's eyes were compared to a beast's, and the import of this received interpretation lends weight to the primacy of Rachel (and by association with her *venustus*, of the Angles) as indicative of Christian leadership. The text continues, "in capillis vero religiosorum divitum persona monstratur" ("indeed, through hair is indicated a person of religious riches"). Apponius, in this commentary on Canticles, writes that the movement of the herd up the mountain is significant of the movement from a physical or carnal sense to a spiritual one, much like Jacob's move from Leah to Rachel. "Capilli," he writes, "Ecclesiae esse meruerunt" ("By hairs churches are indicated").⁴⁰ The same movement is described by Bede, and Bede also speaks about the ascending movement away from sin and temporality. For Bede, like Apponius, hair signifies Christian churches, in turn comprising all believers. The complexity of allusion in Bede's description of the beautiful men with noble hair involves ecclesiastical leadership, a movement towards God, and the natural predilection of all Angles to Christianity.

Bede's allusions are made in the context of an early medieval theology of grace and predestination.⁴¹ This theology is at play in the discourse that governs Gregory's puns, and directs Bede's language as he tries to imply that even in this Roman marketplace, the Angles are clearly predestined to become God's chosen people. Gregory says explicitly that the external beauty of the Angles is not in harmony with their internal beauty. That internal beauty, according to both Augustine and Gregory, is given by grace. It is through grace, as Augustine explains, not merit, that God predestines his elect. Grace moves men out of sin and confusion, that is, out of anger (*ira*).⁴² Augustine also says in his commentary on the book of Judges that, as an angel of God had told the Hebrew people, one must attend to the will of God to escape the wrath (*ira*) of God.⁴³ Accordingly, Gregory says that the Angles will move out of anger or wrath, *de ira*, in his Latin pun on the name of the Angle's home, Deira (a province in the northeast of England just south of Bede's home at Jarrow). The process of conversion requires not only a movement of the soul out of sin, but also a verbal confession of faith; thus, the Angles are shown to be already prepared in their own language to sing "alleluia."

This is Gregory's third pun on the name of the king Ælle.⁴⁴ Bede reports that Gregory notes in his commentary on Job, "Behold, the languages/tongues of Britain...begin to sing the praises of the divine with the Hebrew Alleluia."⁴⁵ To Bede, just as the physical form of the Angles shows them prepared for Christianity, so does their language—even in their pagan state, the Angles have unwittingly been praying to God. Perhaps to emphasize this association, Bede adds independently of the Whitby version that this praise is sung to God the Creator, the one person of the Christian trinity responsible for the form of all created things. According to Gregory, form itself (like that of the beautiful Angles) declares its ultimate submission to God.⁴⁶ Bede is employing at almost every moment the allusive language of tribal salvation.

Tribal salvation is essential to Bede, writing as he is about the church of *nostrae gentis*. The elect, according to Bede's commentary on Ezra 6:14–15, comprise both angels and men. Paul's letter to the Colossians 1:12, alluded to by Gregory in both the Bedan and Whitby version, tells us that the faithful are promised a place in Heaven among the angels.⁴⁷ In the numerical perfection of divine creation, the elect will replace the fallen angels. Bede points this out in his commentary on Tobias: "Having been led to the heavenly homeland, humanity's [elect] will be welcomed by God,...and also by the angels whose number they will complete."⁴⁸ On Ezra 1:7–8, Bede comments that the prince's vases are counted in order to signify that the Lord knows "numerus electorum suorum" ("the number of His elect"). Gregory's so-called pun tells Bede's readers that the Pope earnestly sought to bring Christianity to the worthy, foreign race of Angles in order to transform them into the elect of God, into a portion of the beautiful angelic multitude. In their graceful appearance and in their language, the story implies, the Angles show they are already predisposed to receiving salvation. Bede has weighed each word carefully, and meticulously built this scene, as might be expected of a priest and one of the most revered of Christian commentators, on a nexus of allusions to Scripture.

THE OLD ENGLISH BEDE

The Old English translation of Bede's Latin, made over 150 years later probably by a member of King Alfred's circle, appears to maintain (and presumably thus to confirm) the allegorical significance of the earlier Latin. There are intriguing differences, though, and primary among them is the Old English version's changed emphasis on race. The Old English introduces merchants from Britain ("cypemen of Brytene") who bring the slave boys to Rome. Both Bede and the Whitby version report that the boys were there, but neither mentions sixth-century Britain. Bede alone mentions merchants, but not their British origins. This poses a slightly thorny problem for the Old English version, since traditionally, the Anglo—Saxons are thought to have wrested control of the island from the indigenous Celtic Britons

in the midfifth century. If the merchants were displaced Britons, second—class subjects of Anglo-Saxon kings, how did they come by Anglian or Anglo-Saxon (“Ongle”) slaves? If the merchants were Saxons or Mercians or Goths, does the Old English term “Ongles” imply their shared exclusion from an Anglian/Angelic salvation? The narrator of the Old English story avoids the issue of race and says that “heo of Breotone ealonde brohte wære” (“they were brought from the island of Britain”). He collapses all races (*gentes* or *peodan*) current in ninth—century Britain into a single people, apparently many or some of whom exhibit similar physical characteristics: “ond þæs ealondes bigengan swelcre onsyne men wæron” (“and of this island’s inhabitants were men of such form”).⁴⁹ The Old English version thus avoids the racial designation “Briton,” and thereby excises the Celts from this originary English narrative.

An interest in race is also evident in the Old English request by Gregory to hear “of hwelcon londe oðpe of hwyrcle þeode” (“of which land or of which tribe”) the boys were brought. This replicates Bede’s Latin almost exactly, but is nevertheless relatively unusual. A statement of or inquiry into geographical origins tends to be atypical of Anglo—Saxon texts. A heathen judge asks Bede’s Alban, a Celt and the British proto-martyr, “Cuius... familiæ vel generis es?” (“What is your family or race?” I.vii.30) —the Old English version of this episode omits the question entirely. The emphasis here is on kinship, not geography. Beowulf, on his arrival in Geatland, is asked by the shore guard, “Nu ic eower sceal/frumcyn witan” (“Now I must know your ancestry,” ll. 251b–252a).⁵⁰ Beowulf is commonly named “bearn Ecgþeowes” (“son of Ecgtheow”). Characters tend to be introduced into Old English poems by their ancestry, rarely by their place of birth. It is their nobility, not their homeland, that gives them social worth. Consider *Andreas*, a long Old English poetic life of St. Andrew in the Vercelli Book, which introduces the apostles as “þeodnes þegnas” (“thanes of the lord,” 3a), Germanic heroes associated with and defined by their relation to a high king⁵¹; Widsith, a traveling poet who tells of his ancestry (4a–5b), and for whom tribes, not countries, define a community; and St. Margaret, whose sanctity is tested in one version of her *passio* by a demon whose lineage she demands to know.⁵² Since a nobleman’s holdings could be in a number of different kingdoms, association with the family will have taken primacy over association with its sometimes scattered territory. A possible but arguable exception comes in the eleventh—century poem *The Battle of Maldon*, where Ælfwine is “bearn Ælfrices” (l. 209b), although he notes his kin is from Mercia.⁵³ In short, the introduction of “londe” into Gregory’s question is marked by its relative infrequency in such situations, and indicates that a broad geographic identity can meaningfully mask ethnic differences.

With respect to the Latin terms under consideration, *venustus* is translated in the Old English by “fæger.” In Old English, the term “fæger” generally means the same thing as beautiful. As Ælfric of Eynsham, the prolific tenth—century Anglo—Saxon homilist and teacher, clearly notes in his glossary, “*pulcher homo fæger*

mann.”⁵⁴ While “fæger” can mean proper, righteous, honest, and pleasing to the eye, it carries much the same connotations in monastic writing as *pulcher*. Aldhelm, an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon bishop and scholar, in his prose *De uirginitate*, uses the adjective *pulcherrime* which is glossed in Old English as “fægestre.” Intriguingly, *venustate* is later glossed in that text with the same Old English term, “fæger-nesse,” perhaps suggesting in this instance a collapse of distinction between sorts of beauty.⁵⁵ The *Liber scintillarum* of Defensor, a monk of Ligugé, reads, “Christus non in corporis sed in anime pulchritudine delectatur illam ergo et tu dilige in qua delectatur deus”; this is glossed in a mid-eleventh-century Old English hand, “crist na on lichaman ac on sawle fægernysse gegladað þa eornostlice eac þu lufa on þæra gegladað god” (“Christ allures with beauty not of the body but of the soul so that you may with earnestness love each one who is drawn to God”).⁵⁶ Note the use of *delectare*, which Bede used in his homily on Matthew in direct relation to *pulcher*, perhaps modeled on Augustine’s *Confessions* (II, vi) —beauty *draws* one to God. Defensor continues in his extended definition of *pulcher* to attribute to Gregory the notion that heavenly beauty can be confounded by earthly beauty.⁵⁷ Perhaps to warn of such confusion and to alert learned AngloSaxons to the symbolic function of beauty, an Old English prognostication reads, “Si videris faciem tuam pulchram gaudium significat,” glossed, “gif þu gesihst ansine þine fægere blisse getacnaþ” (“If you see beauty in your own form, this signifies grace/joy”).⁵⁸ Again and commonly, physical beauty enjoys a symbolic and allusive function in these Anglo—Saxon texts.

Candidus, a shining white, is glossed in Old English simply as “hwite,” or white. Sometimes one finds the term glossed as “scynende,” shining.⁵⁹ Heaven, angels, and divine light are often described in Latin texts as brilliant or shining white; these associations also pertain to the Old English term “hwite.” Perhaps anticipating the King James “exceeding white as snow,” an Old English antiphon gloss renders *candidus* as “þurhhwit,” thoroughly white.⁶⁰ In the Old English poetic version of Genesis, Satan is described before his fall as shining white: “þa spræc se ofermoda cyning, þa wæs engla scynost, hwitost on heofne” (“Then spoke the insolent king, who was most shining of the angels, whitest in Heaven,” *Genesis* B, l. 338).⁶¹ The light of Heaven, too, is described as shining white (l. 614), as are angels (l. 349). The face of Moses, according to Ælfric, “scean swa swa sunne and his gewæda scinon on snawes hwitnysse” (“shone like the sun, and his clothing shone with the whiteness of snow”).⁶² Again, in a homily Ælfric wrote for the second Sunday of Lent, he renders Isaiah 1:18 into Old English, “Þis sæde drihten, and gif eowre synna wæron wolcnreade ær ðan, hi beoð scinende on snawes hwitnysse” (“Thus saith the Lord, ‘And if your sins were whelk-red [scarlet] before then, they shall become shining with the whiteness of snow’ ”).⁶³ Whiteness is symbolically a quality of holiness, of spirituality, and of purity. Its attribution to the Anglian boys in both the Latin and Old English carries with it these familiar connotations.

Bede's *capillorum egregia* is translated in the Alfredian Old English as "æðellice feax." "Æðellice" literally means noble, but is commonly broadened to encompass things or persons of a superlative quality. The minster at Wearmouth is described as "æpele," for example.⁶⁴ A Durham *Hymnal* typically glosses *egregius* with "æðele," but uses this same Old English term for *inclitus*, gloriosus, and *nobilis*.⁶⁵ "Feax" is the hair of the head, sometimes the Old English gloss for *coma*, Latin simply for a lock of hair or an animal's mane.⁶⁶ It is important to note that hairstyle was sometimes a marker of class or *gens*, as among the Merovingians.⁶⁷ The Burgundian Law Codes, compiled by King Gundobad in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, speak to the shame or disgrace of having one's hair cut off.⁶⁸ Like the Burgundians, Kings Ine and Alfred, both of Wessex, and Æthelbert of Kent fined freedmen if one grabbed another violently by the hair.⁶⁹ A good deal is said in the *HE* about tonsure, the monastic cut of the hair. Bede includes a version of a letter of Abbot Ceolfrith to the Pictish King Nechtan, sent after 706 (*HE*, V, xxi), in which the cut of the hair plays a major role.⁷⁰ In short, "æðellice feaxe" speaks to an involved and complex cultural tradition of hairstyles among nobles and among races, far more complicated than "lovely hair" implies. Like "fæger" and "hwhite," the noble hair of the boys indicates a level of cultural, social, and spiritual significance to the story beyond the literal and beyond the libidinous.

If we are to reconstruct how communities—tribes, nations, provinces, churches—were understood by Bede, we must first consider his participation in early medieval habits of reading. A historical community like the *gens Anglorum* was bounded not only by a shared compendium of stories, but more importantly, by a common manner of interpreting old books.

ELECTION AND THE *LIBELLUS RESPONSIONUM*

Bede also implies the election of the Angles with what I will call structural homology, by which I mean the reproduction of the structure but not necessarily the contents of other texts—something we see, for example, in Greek tragedies as they reproduce choral beginning, catastasis, catastrophe, hamartia, peritia, and so forth. One such structural element is the citation. Consider in this respect the insertion in the *HE* of Gregory's responses to the questions posed him by Augustine of Canterbury. Much has been written on this section of the *HE*, called the *Libellus Responsum*.⁷¹ Two chief issues are of interest: first, how it fits into the *HE*, and second, the larger relevance of the content of the questions. Bede is not the first to cite original sources in his work, but it is relatively rare to see ecclesiastical documents reproduced at such length. We must distinguish here between citation and reproduction. Bede will often cite Scripture, or Augustine, or Jerome, or whomever, but it is very rare to see, for example, an entire document reproduced in a historical narrative. Perhaps the most famous example of such

complete reproduction is Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History*, known to Bede in Rufinus' Latin version.⁷² In his first book, Eusebius cites passages from Josephus as historical verification of the gospel narratives. But he also reproduces in full letters he claims were exchanged between Abgar the Toparch and Jesus himself. He puts them in, he says, as does Bede, in their proper place. The Book of Ezra also reproduces letters in full—the edict of Cyrus (Ezra 6:2–12), for example, and the edict of Artaxerxes (7:12–26). Given these authoritative models, the question then arises, Why does Bede reproduce the *libellus* rather than either summarize its contents or cite brief portions of it? In contrast, Bede summarizes the contents of the Barking *libellus* in his story of King Sebba of the East Saxons in book four of the *HE*.⁷³ Similarly, Bede appears to reproduce in full a very long letter of Abbot Ceolfrith to the Pictish King Nechtan on the dating of Easter (V, xxi), but Bede does not say it is a literal reproduction, only, as Wallace-Hadrill has noted, written by Bede “in hunc modum.” The same is the case for Caedwalla's epitaph, which is placed in the *HE* according to “hoc modo.”⁷⁴ Bede carefully distinguishes throughout the *HE* between reports, his version of documents, documents themselves, and quotes.⁷⁵ As to why these distinctions are meaningful, one answer may lie with Ezra.

The Book of Ezra, or the apocryphal Esdras books which Bede might have known,⁷⁶ describes the Return of the Hebrews to the Holy Land after the Babylonian captivity, and the activity of a scribe, Ezra, who restores the Law (that is, the Torah) after it had been burned. This act of scribal restoration, notably in a new script form invented for the purpose (the Anglo-Saxons used their own script form for vernacular texts), builds up the people, according to Bede, much like the returning Hebrews rebuild the Temple. Text here is at the heart of the definition of community. Of the twelve tribes, only two tribes return completely to Israel, Benjamin and Judah, along with a portion of the priestly tribe, “tribus sacerdotali ac levitica,” Levi.⁷⁷ These three tribes mark the limits of their integrated community through written genealogies. Those individuals without written genealogies are rejected. Those who are *alienigenis*, of foreign descent, are ousted, and marriages to foreign women are dissolved. Note how important the *written* word is to the definition, establishment, and maintenance of community. Bede comments that the Hebrews wanted to know “qui vere ad populum Israhel vel ad sacerdotale genus pertinerent” (“who *truly* belonged to the people of Israel or to the race of priests”).⁷⁸ This could only be accomplished by recourse to “*scrip*-turam genealogiae suae” (“*written* records [or letters] of their genealogies”). Text, not report, is essential. Torah, which was an oral collection since its destruction, is now written down by Ezra. The Torah scroll, which is legally considered a person, physically manifests the communal memory and law. This scroll becomes the undying poet, historian, and prophet to the people. Jews and Christians are people who find their identity chiefly in a living book, not in a tentative collection of stories and ideas entrusted to the fading memories of men.

The book acts as a physical heart to these communities, and that physicality, that textuality, cannot be overestimated. The community of Wearmouth and Jarrow celebrated Ezra's role as the scribe in their great pandect, the *Codex Amiatinus*, which begins with a portrait of Ezra, a painting suggested perhaps by Bede himself.⁷⁹ The act of scribes painting a scribe in the act of inscribing Scripture testifies to the close relation the Wearmouth-Jarrow community saw between its identity as Christians and its work as scribes. Genealogies also enjoy this textual status. Ezra tells Bede that it is *written* genealogies, not remembered ones or sung ones, which ultimately count. Also reminiscent of Wearmouth-Jarrow, the work of rebuilding the Temple in Ezra—which represents the Church—stops several times. However much Israel beseeches its rulers, they will not be convinced merely by spoken reminders of their predecessor's promises to rebuild the Temple. Scribes thus seek out the letters and books which confirm the royal promises; with them, scribes convince kings and people. This effort takes place "in bibliotheca" ("in a library") and results in the socially constitutive authority of a text. Given this relationship between research, text, and common salvation, we may want to consider the reproduction of the *libellus* in light of its role as a textual object, as evidence of a contract testifying to a community of the book. It is its complete physical, textual presence in the *HE*—rather than as a partially remembered or recited past—which verifies beyond doubt the antiquity and authority of the English mission.

There are many parallels between Ezra and the *HE* perhaps since the returned exiles are, as Bede writes in his commentary on Habakkuk, "the clearest figure of our own condition."⁸⁰ They are the few elect from among the whole people, *populus*, who return home to the heavenly Jerusalem.⁸¹ Bede calls these elect the *fili ecclesiae*. In the end, we might imagine that Bede's *HE* may have been patterned on Ezra's story of a migration of three tribes, who reestablish a faith and reconstruct its texts,⁸² a people defined by recorded descent, through the work of learned priests in their own script form among archives and among the people, work that halts several times, and proceeds with the help of well-disposed rulers. But beyond structural similarities, there are also parallels in theme which have gone unremarked. The questions Augustine asks Gregory concern episcopal government and native custom.⁸³ Augustine asks after the consecration of bishops, where to build churches, the use of the English Church, her relation to the Gaulish use and episcopacy, and of various ecclesiastical customs. He is asking, like Ezra, how to build this temple and how its priests should act. Also like Ezra, the *libellus* addresses the theme of who does and who does not belong to the community of the faithful. It asks after lawful and unlawful marriage (an extremely important concern in Ezra) and after the integration of pregnant women and befouled onanists into the Christian community—that is, after the integration of those who are perceived to be unclean or deceived.⁸⁴ The *HE* spoke to the restoration of the Christian church by a chosen people through textual culture, prayer, and curatorial

work. In this guise, the *HE* also speaks to the divisions of race which comprise the kernel of ethnic tradition inherited by Bede's successors.

ALBAN AND THE EXTENSION OF SALVATION

In the *HE*, Bede tells the story of the martyrdom of St. Alban. Feasted on 22 June, Alban was one of the more popular saints in the Anglo-Saxon liturgical calendar.⁸⁵ After Alban offers sanctuary to a Christian cleric, he is suddenly imbued by divine grace, and becomes "Christianus integro ex corde" ("a wholehearted Christian," I.vii.28, my trans.). Alban is then captured by soldiers of a nefarious commander, who although they are probably Roman, are not explicitly described as such. They bring him before a judge who is sacrificing to demons. Much as Bede's early chapters of his *HE* inquire into the ethnic origins of the settled peoples of Britain, so too does the judge now inquire into Alban's race. The judge asks Alban, "Cuius...familiæ vel generis es?" ("What is your family or race?" I.vii.30, my trans.). So far, Bede's reader has not been told. Instead of stating the obvious, that any Christian indigenous to Britain in the early third century had to have been either Roman or Celtic, Bede avoids naming Alban's race by cleverly recouring to the writings of the Frank, Fortunatus (d.600). Quoting Fortunatus, Bede tells his reader that Alban is called "Britain's child" (I.vii.28). Bede emphasizes that Alban belongs to the whole island, rather than to a particular *gens*, or race, such as the Britons. In fact, nowhere in his account does Bede make any mention whatsoever of Alban's ethnic identity, notwithstanding the judge's direct question. This is a scene meticulously made.

Perhaps looking to those who would inquire into the racial origins of the Anglo-Saxon polity, Bede records Alban's response to the judge thus: "Quid ad te pertinet qua stirpe sim genitus? Sed si veritatem religionis audire desideras, Christianum iam me esse Christianisque officiis uacare cognosce" ("Why does it concern you to know of which line I am born of? But if you desire to hear of true religion, know me finally to be a Christian and to empty myself in Christian duty," I.vii.30, my trans.). This response registers a fundamental divide between the language in which the judge articulates identity—one which Alban rejects—and the language in which Alban articulates identity. At the same time, though, the two languages are mutually comprehensible. Alban implicitly understands the racial and genealogical terms of the public language within which his identity will have meaning to the judge. But Alban refuses to identify himself in terms of his bilingual ancestry. Alban's response indicates instead that he identifies himself *essentially* as a Christian (*esse*), that his very being is defined in religious terms.

In fact, his allegiance to God seems to manifest itself in a tribally selfabnegating practice: Alban declares that he empties (*vacare*) himself of himself in the service of God. What remains of his unallied self, of his identity, and of his potential for allegiance is solely his devotion to Christianity. And this is a major point of this

episode in the *HE*: Alban's Christianity is to him an aspect of his fundamental being exclusive of expressed allegiance, not a set of practices in which he voluntarily takes part. He says he empties himself of *self*, and what remains is his love of God. Neither does Alban sustain two exclusive identities, one essentially genealogical, and one voluntarily Christian. He claims to be a Christian essentially, to the core of his being, or, as Bede puts it, *integro ex corde*. This divide between Christian identity and tribal identity is the one Bede will attempt to bridge in these opening chapters of his *HE*. Bede's local response to universalizing Christian identity is one which seeks to emphasize in the course of Christian history the tribal, as well as the individual, promise of salvation. But it must be stressed that Bede does not, like Alban, forget his tribal allegiance in the face of his Christian faith. Bede's role as a priest to the Angles is shaped by the narrative of Hebrew election, an ethnic election, extended then to the nations of the world. Jesus, prophesied Caiaphas, would die first for a *gens* and then for the faithful: "Iesus moriturus erat pro gente et non tantum pro gente sed et ut filios Dei qui erant dispersi congregaret in unum" ("Jesus was to die for the nation [*ethnie*]⁸⁶—and not for the nation [*ethnie*] only, but to gather together in unity the scattered children of God," John 11:51). Paul styled himself a priest unto the *gentes* (Romans 15:16). Similarly, Bede suggests that the Angles shall be as a priest unto the nations of Britain.⁸⁶

Frustrated by Alban's obstinacy, the judge orders Alban's execution and has him led to a river. As the group approaches its goal, Bede reveals that a crowd of people occupied a bridge over the river.⁸⁷ Images of rivers usually serve to divide collectives, to separate one *gens* from another; but here Bede manipulates an image which traditionally serves to divide one people from another, thereby suggesting that Christianity—specifically, Christian example—can unify diverse peoples. The image of the bridge is a curious flourish in Bede's typically sparse narrative, and its cumbersome presence in this otherwise economical story makes stylistic sense if one allows that it serves to bring the separated crowds together. Just as the bridge counteracts the tribally divisive function of boundary water, so does this Christian martyr. Here, Bede shows that not only is Christianity a unifying force, but also that Christianity unifies groups typically divided by boundary water—tribes. Next in this story, the waters part to allow Alban, as they once allowed Moses and the numerous tribes of Israel, to pass safely through. (Notably, not all of the tribes of Israel or Britain constitute the elect.) Alban comes to the river, raises his eyes to Heaven, and the river provides him with a *via*, a path or way, by which to cross. This image is intriguingly like the image of Vikings crossing via a path in *The Battle of Maldon*.

Having passed through parted waters, Alban then ascends a hill where the same¹ river suddenly bubbles up at his feet. Bede glosses this remarkable image by writing that "etiam torrentem martyri obsequium detulisse" ("even the stream offered service [or obsequies] to the martyr"). Then, when the river "devotione

completa...reversus est ad naturam" ("had fulfilled its devotion...it returned to its natural course," I.vii.32). At the next moment, the executioner's eyes fall to the ground, depriving one witness of physical, but not spiritual, sight. Perhaps this image is meant to invoke Christ's blessing on those who, unlike Thomas, believe but have not seen. Finally, Bede writes that the movement of the water to the top of the hill was *oportunum* ("fitting," "suitable," or "necessary"). This miracle befit the situation, symbolically suggesting the consonance of geography, Nature (*Natura*), and Christianity. One might conclude that in paying homage to Alban, this river, companion to those waters that divide one people from another, forsakes its natural role as a territorial divider of tribes in England, and, as ought to be natural to any denizen of the island, offers its pious service to Christianity.

In Christian tradition, the river signifies baptism, rebirth, life in Christ, and the glory of the saints. The Christian reader is reminded in Revelation 7:17 that "the Lamb who is at the throne will be their shepherd and will lead them [i.e., the persecuted] to springs of living water."⁸⁸ In fact, Bede himself makes this connection in the story of Alban by noting that the executioner "*fonte baptismatis non est ablutus*" ("was not yet washed in the waters of baptism"). The river, as it provided a way for Alban to complete his martyrdom, provides a way for pagans to reach eternal life. When Augustine returned Christianity to eastern Britain at the end of the sixth century, he did more than introduce indigenous Germanic tribes to a means for salvation: he introduced them to a language of identity comprised in part of such evocative images. Through the implicit logic of these images and metaphors, he necessarily redefined the good, thereby changing the dynamics of the dialogue between the language of identity and the language of morality. These images were sites where that dialogue took place. The language of (Christian) morality soon forced a reconfiguration of the images and symbols of textual culture which had previously lent cohesion to various secular collectives. In moving the conceptual goal posts, as it were, the dialogue between the two languages enabled Angles, Saxons, and others to see themselves as part of a larger (religious) collective. In other words, by redefining the good, or that to which the individual and the collective should attain, the various tribes of Britain were forced by the process of conversion to imagine themselves and their respective communal aims differently. At the same time, though, their language of communal (that is, tribal) identity affected the indigenous articulation of Christian (that is, moral) identity. It was Bede's genius to negotiate that articulation.

Identification with the transcendent process of Christian salvation always requires the effacement of self and a secondary emphasis on secular affiliations.⁸⁹ As St. Alban's defiance of indigenous pagan custom further demonstrates, secular orders of identity were sometimes incommensurate with those of Christianity. Images that lent cohesion to secular collectives—the image of boundary water, for example—are employed in Bede's story to illustrate the role Christianity was to play in reconfiguring the various peoples of Britain. Just as Alban blurs the line

between compliant saint and defiant hero, so too does the image of the river blur the line between the waters of baptism and the waters of tribal division. Moments like the scene of Alban at the river demonstrate the necessary ambiguities of images and words which are bearing the weight of cultural transformation. A negotiation between the cohesive principles of the secular collective and the cohesive principles of Christianity takes place in the first twenty-three chapters of the first book of Bede's *HE*. It provides a conceptual foundation on which the longer story of tribal conversion can be built. Bede pins much of this transformation on the semantic range of the term *gens*.

A PAGAN *GENS* *ANGLORUM*

Naming his work, Bede writes in his Preface, "Historiam gentis Anglorum ecclesiasticam." *Gens* (pl. *gentes*) is not a word which describes a nation or a geopolitical entity, but describes a race, a clan, or a tribe—an *ethnie*. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* gives several definitions of *gens* as it appears in classical literature. The preferred definition is "a race, nation, people." In his *Historia*, for example, Tacitus uses the phrase "Germani, læta bello gens" (4.16); L. Annius Florus, in *Epitome bellorum omnium annorum*, writes "inmanissimi gentium Galli atque Germani" (I.45; 3.10.2). In each case, the Germans and the Gauls are termed *gens*, not nations. Their constitution as a *natio* depends on the presence of a *regulum*, or ruling power since a nation is a people that is ruled. Similarly, Bede, in *De temporum ratione liber*, lists the "gens vandalorum, halanorum, et gothorum" ("race of Vandals, of Alans, and of Goths") as well as the "gens langobardorum" ("race of Lombards").⁹⁰ The definition which seems best to translate Bede's uses of *gens* is a "clan or group of families sharing the same *nomen* and the same supposed ancestor...(among non-Romans) clan, family, house."⁹¹ This ancestry is established and maintained in an Anglian historical memory. Bede states that the Angles claim Hengist and Horsa as ancestors, ancestors from whom all the ruling families or houses of Britain sprout.⁹²

The term *gens* has two relatively distinct but related biblical antecedents. On the one hand, as in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, *gens* refers to the profligate pagans.⁹³ On the other hand, as in John 18:35, *gens* refers collectively to the descendants of Abraham.⁹⁴ With reference to Scripture, the *gens of gens Anglorum* therefore indicates either the heathen Angles or the Angles as the people of God. In Bede's description of the inhabitants of Britain before the arrival of Augustine, the Angles figure as a pagan people. It is not until the arrival of Augustine and the conversion of the Angles (in chapter 27 of the first book) that their role as God's people becomes evident. With respect to Bede's treatment of the Angles before the arrival of Augustine, that is, with respect to Bede's treatment of a pagan people, we must infer that "gens," since it cannot at this point indicate a Christian

collective, indicates a profligate pagan *ethnie*. The term *gens* applies in both pagan and Christian contexts.

The rhetorical transformation of *gens* is an essential component of the tribal narrative in the *HE*. The *HE* is usually approached as a work of history. The description of the *gens Anglorum* in the early books of the *HE* is often considered reflective of failing accuracy rather than of an intentional program. Since John Mitchell Kemble in 1876, scholars have accepted that Bede's tribal divisions at the *adventus Saxonum* are not factually accurate.⁹⁵ For example, R.G. Collingwood and J.N.L. Myres declared in a seminal work that "Bede's clear-cut tribal migrations are difficult to reconcile with the archaeological remains or with other literary evidence not inferior in authority to his own."⁹⁶ In 1956 and 1963, Peter Hunter Blair reiterated this view without qualification.⁹⁷ Again, in 1989, Richard Hodges cautioned that in this regard we must "distinguish between myth and reality." He reported that David Dumville and Sims-Williams "have cast doubt on the details of the settlement described at a later date, notably by Gildas and Bede."⁹⁸ Sims-Williams apologetically cites the "unverifiable tradition" on which Bede was forced to depend."⁹⁹ Dumville points out that it is not the case that "we should necessarily accept his [Bede's] view of centuries for which he is at best a secondary authority as more reliable than that of any modern scholar."¹⁰⁰

This line of inquiry, though, has sought to answer the historical question, What was the actual composition of the *gens Anglorum*? These scholars have rightly seen Bede's efforts handicapped by poor sources. In an attempt to understand why Bede would permit such factual uncertainty, scholars such as James Campbell and Henry Mayr-Harting have pointed to Bede's overall didactic purposes.¹⁰¹ This has been described, at least since Schoebe in 1965, as a sense of history peculiar to Christian tradition.¹⁰² This line of approach describes the *gens Anglorum* not as an attempt at indicating an actual ethnic designation, but as part of a rhetorical strategy employed by Bede to extend to his readers a sense of identity implicit in Gregorian nomenclature. But even this second view does not fully explain Bede's introductory chapters.

Following from the first line of argument, Bede's neat tribal divisions do not correspond to the actual composition of the *gens Anglorum*. Following from the second line of argument, Britain's *gens Anglorum* is therefore understood to be a collective of various Germanic tribes. But, the cohesive principle of this collective is (anachronistically) the Christianity that later unified them.¹⁰³ There is a sense of inevitability in this view, an implication that if the tribes were later to be bound together, they must have originally enjoyed some fundamental similarity and unity. But this *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy obscures the divisions which generated the pressing need for Christian unity in the first place. In narratives of ethnogenesis, these fundamental divisions are understood as limits of historical memory, monuments in the Nietzschean sense, which sustain an independent kernel of tradition. Christianity acclimated itself to regional tradition insofar as

Christians allowed a reconfiguration of communal identity, but not a dismissal of ethnic identity. As Bede's narrative makes clear, Christianity does not obliterate ethnic differences but reinterprets them, and reconciles them to an abstract religious order of identity. Clearly, it cannot have been Christianity which first served to unify the *gens Anglorum* and to distinguish them from other equally pagan *gens*.

For example, Wormald points out that Anglian and Saxon cultures remained relatively distinct at least until the tenth century. The purported secular unity of the Anglo-Saxons, he says, is usually presumed with reference to the unifying status of the *bretwalda*, a claim which rests on contentious interpretations of a slim body of evidence.¹⁰⁴ Whatever the precise status of a *bretwalda*, he did not extend, in his purported political domination, a unifying national identity. As Steven Fanning has argued, *bretwalda* is an Old English reflex of *imperium*, a term which for Jerome, Augustine, Isidore, and others indicated rule over a plurality of *gentes* or *nationes*. Fanning asks provocatively, "If Bede saw the English as a single *gens Anglorum*, how could he interpret the rise of any particular ruler of the English over the subgroup of that *gens* as the establishment of *imperium*, which meant the rule over *foreign* peoples and kingdoms?"¹⁰⁵ Consistent with this view, Bede's lexicon of collective names and his images of geographical boundaries (especially rivers) indicates the ethnic singularity of the *gens Anglorum*. It did not include Saxons. Bede's foremost difficulty, as I see it, and one which his rhetorical strategy aimed to solve, was how to prepare the ethnic traditions of the pagan *gens Anglorum* for their textual adoption of Christianity. He needed to tell an old story according to newly inherited models of historical discourse.

Bede construed pagan history rhetorically and lexically in such a way as to form an introduction to his longer description of Christian conversion in the rest of the *HE*. But in order to do so, in order to prepare the ground, he had to manage his evidence in such a way as to isolate the *gens Anglorum* from the other *gens* which shared the island with them. Their story of racial origins, their ethnogenesis in other words, had to emphasize some rather important differences from the stories of other tribes. In *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Anthony D. Smith proposes six "chief features which distinguish *ethnie* from other collectivities of human beings."¹⁰⁶ Three of these features are especially pertinent to describing Bede's narrative of ethnogenesis, his process of rhetorically distinguishing the *gens Anglorum* from other *gens*. They are: a common myth of descent, a collective name, and an association with a specific territory.¹⁰⁷ A common myth of descent and a common name are fairly obvious in this opening book. Each of these features describes an aspect of tribal identity which comes to be transformed into an aspect of English religious identity.

In a provocative 1977 study of Bede's *HE*, J.N. Stephens pointed out that the first twenty-three chapters of the *HE* have yet to be adequately addressed with

respect to the rest of the work. At the time of Stephens' study, these chapters were "commonly disposed of as a clumsy introduction to the work which properly begins in cap[ut] 23...."¹⁰⁸ Stephens argued that the introductory chapters of Bede's *HE*, which describes the pre-Augustinian state of Britain, served to "show the *gens Anglorum* that they had a new history.... He showed them that they belonged first to the history of Britain...and then to the catholic history of the Church."¹⁰⁹ What is directly applicable for my purposes is Stephens' claim that Bede's is not an ecclesiastical history if by "ecclesiastical" we understand solely the ecclesiastical articulation, that is the Church history, of the unified people, the *gens Anglorum*. In fact, before the arrival of Augustine, the Angles seem to have had no church as such. It is therefore senseless to speak of an ecclesiastical history of the pre-Augustinian Angles. Against this view, Susan Reynolds has lately argued that the *gens Anglorum* be considered a single entity "in their loyalty to Rome and Canterbury."¹¹¹ This view that a unified *gens Anglorum* comes about only through the intercession of Rome through Canterbury is also offered by Peter Hunter Blair and Patrick Wormald.¹¹² These views all focus on the later history of the *gens Anglorum*, leaving the (especially ethnographic) purpose of Bede's first twenty-three chapters largely unexplained. More importantly, in their focus on later centuries and on Anglian devotion to the Church, these views do not explain the purported unity of the pagan *gens Anglorum*—at least as Bede portrays it—before their conversion to Christianity. Unification of the Angles and Saxons (and, presumably, *lutae*) under the appellation "English" is therefore not valid at least until there appears in Bede's narrative some order of cohesion which either redesignates or downplays ethnic origins. So what are the aspects and limits of Anglian collective identity before the arrival of Augustine? The answer to this question can be had from the carefully chosen lexicon and images of Bede's first twenty-three chapters.

As far as the general historical account is concerned, Bede's first book is, as Colgrave and Mynors point out, largely unoriginal.¹¹³ Bede describes the island of Britain, setting geographical limits to his story. By beginning with the waters, land, flora, fauna, and animals, Bede invokes, in order, the model of Genesis and the first five days of creation. He then tells of the persecution of the Christians (especially of Alban), of the Roman occupation, of Pelagius, and of the attacks of the Picts and Irish on the Christian Britons. Bede goes on to describe the coming of the pagan *gens Anglorum* at the invitation of the Britons, and the intervention of a Gaulish bishop in the Britons' troubles, asserting a connection between Gaul and Britain that would become manifest in the ecclesiastical boundaries set by the Gregorian mission. During these various tales, Bede cites traditions which tell of the origins of various tribes—especially of the Picts and the British Irish. Bede also records that Pope Gregory sent Augustine to Britain, and that Augustine landed in Kent. Augustine receives the pallium, repairs a Christian church, and builds a monastery. At chapter 27, Augustine declares that the *gens Anglorum* are

converted. Bede next inserts a number of questions Augustine asked the Pope as well as the Pope's replies, possibly on the model of the book of Ezra. Bede finishes this first book with a comparison between Saul—the first king of Israel—and the Northumbrian Æthelfrith, who, unassisted by foreigners, vanquishes the native Britons and Irish. David M. Gunn notes of Saul, "His story is part of the larger accounts, in the books of Samuel, of how Israel became a nation-state."¹¹⁴ Considering that the nation of Israel is itself comprised of tribes, we might imagine that Bede's comparison between the *gens ludarum*, or Israel, and the *gens Anglorum* is not an idle one.

Stephens claims that a union of Bede's pre-Augustine and post-Augustine sections of the *HE* is possible only when one accepts that Bede "was instructing the *gens Anglorum* in its past." It is a past, more importantly, whereby "the Anglo-Saxons might understand how they did not live only under the reign of a pagan king, but in the reign of Christ and grasp how the two reigns were related."¹¹⁵ J.M. Wallace-Hadrill has characterized this instruction as one encompassing "the Christian rebirth of the *gens Anglorum*," a "fusion of the concepts of national and spiritual identity."¹¹⁶ He, like Charles Plummer before him, considers this fusion (or "the dawning of unity") as the result of an ecclesiastical effort at Canterbury.

But as Stephens points out, Bede's first twenty-three chapters are about the explicitly pagan past of the *gens Anglorum*: they are not ecclesiastical.¹¹⁷ It is important to stress that these chapters also provide an opportunity for Bede to recast the ethnic—and, as Stephens points out, pagan—history of the *gens Anglorum*.¹¹⁸ They are also identified collectively outside the ken of Canterbury's ability to define them. The racial unity of the *gens Anglorum* permitted their common adoption 150 years later of the Christian religion. Like the Book of Genesis, the self-styled *liber generationis Adam* (5:1), Bede's first twenty-three chapters describe a familial unity inherent in a pre-covenant *ethnie*. Whether this is the historical fact of the matter is here immaterial: Bede's portrait asks his Anglian readers to consider the pre-Augustinian *gens Anglorum* as a discrete and unified people.

The central example of a developing indistinction in the languages of identity is the phrase *gens Anglorum*. The term *gens* forms a nexus between the language of tribal identity and the language of morality. Bede uses it to develop a supratribal, religio-political identity in apposition to localized notions of groups and belonging. Consequently, his implications in the *HE* as a whole develop from this historically instantiated identity such that those leaders who act against the logic of their tribe's own past by rejecting conversion suffer not only religious but also political failure. In this regard, the term *gens* is an especially important semantic nexus because it enjoys two very significant designations in the Middle Ages, as a term of ethnic cohesion (and distinction) and as a term of religious cohesion (and distinction). In understanding its relevance to Bede's overall design, we must come to understand how these two orders of identity—ethnicity and religion—could

exist simultaneously, but not in essential contradiction. *Gens* is a microcosm, an analogue of approachable size, of the larger pattern of shifting and shared identities in the *HE*. Patrick Wormald explains that “from Theodore’s arrival at the latest, all Anglo-Saxons were exposed to a view of themselves as a single people [*gens*] before God—a people who, though they lived in ‘Britannia’ or ‘Saxonia’ and though they called themselves Saxons as well as Angles, were known in Heaven as the ‘gens Anglorum.’”¹¹⁹ The trope is not unusual, and Bede seems to have known it through Augustine’s *Ennarationes in Psalmos*, selection of which he copied into a commonplace book: “We are all...brothers and sisters by our hope in a heavenly inheritance.”¹²⁰ The paradox here is that one could conceivably be a member of the *gens Saxonum*, but understand oneself as part of the larger *gens Anglorum*.

The Christian imperative characterizing Wormald’s *gens Anglorum* ultimately depends for its teleological sense of cohesion not on the redesignation of *gens* as a term devoid of its tribal implications, but on a new ethnogenesis which refigured Christ and Abraham as tribal ancestors. In other words, one did not have to deny one’s tribal ancestry and tribal allegiance to consider one’s self within the Christian family. One could be both a Saxon and a Christian. For the *gens Anglorum* who from their secular standpoint saw themselves united ultimately by their common ancestry, the term *gens* serves not only this cohesive function, but a partative one as well. The partative function of the term distinguishes the *gens Anglorum*, understood as denoting the *ethnie* of the Angles, from the Irish *gens*, the Saxon *gens*, and all other *gens*. This ethnic distinction depends, for the *gens Anglorum*, on declarations of common tribal ancestry in Woden, who is thought to authorize a “*patria* and a ruling dynasty.”¹²¹ The language of tribal ancestry infused declarations of community because Christian identity was described in textual culture as familial, emphasizing the role of Abraham and Adam as ancestors of all Christians. But that distant familial identity notwithstanding (after all, the story of Babel described a single family of men divided by language into nations), the *gens Anglorum* maintained their tribal identity *as* Christians, not *in spite of* their Christianity. There is some evidence that a fusion of *gentes* into a single *gens* was rare. Henry Mayr-Harting has written that Widukind of Corvey attempted in a tenth-century narrative a “coalescence of Franks and Saxons, [but] he said only that they had become *quasi una gens ex Christiani fide*, as if one *gens* as a result of Christianity.”¹²²

With the arrival of the Faith, the distinct possibility arises that *gens*, with its explicitly biblical antecedents, complicated the primacy of ethnic divisiveness implicit in the language of tribal distinction. *Gens* appears in perhaps the most significant of biblical phrases to an historian like Bede, engaged as he is in recording the progress of faith in history. God’s covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17: 4) reads, “Dixit ei Deus: Ego sum, et pactum meum tecum, erisque pater multarum gentium” (“And God said to him: I am, and my pact with you is that you shall be

the father of a multitude of *gentium*”). Bede comments, “Unde et ipse, quia verbum divinæ æternitatis fideliter audivit, accepit in augmentum præmii ut pater multarum gentium et vocaretur et esset” (“There and unaided, because he heard the eternal fidelity of the divine word, he accepted in full the gift of being and of being called father of a multitude of *gentium*”).¹²³ By virtue of this pact, all Christians, since they are literally children of Abraham and bound by his covenant, are united in their familial relation to (and descent from) Abraham, notwithstanding their own *gens*.¹²⁴ Both Woden and Abraham could therefore simultaneously fulfill the semantic and notional role of the ancestor who unites all those of his lineage. Thus, in the confluence of the language of identity which Alban speaks and the language of identity which Alban’s judge speaks, Anglo-Saxons recently introduced to the Faith could have understood themselves as literally descended from both Woden and Abraham. In this reformed narrative of ethnogenesis, they could consider their physical selves a part of the family of Angles (or Saxons) and their spiritual selves as a part of the family of Christ.

With careful and particular narrative qualifications of *gens*, Bede combines the spiritual unity of polyethnic Christian faith with the implicit racial divisions engendered in the *gens* of ethnic history. The term *gens Anglorum* bridges two areas of semantic association: the word *gens* at certain points in Bede’s narrative signifies ethnic divisions, and other points signifies Christian unity. Yet, translating *gens Anglorum* simply as “English” ignores this dual signification, the rhetorical use to which it is put, and the bifurcated language of identity implicit in Bede’s narrative. Pope Gregory tells Augustine to reconsecrate pagan temples, so that “dum gens ipsa eadem fana sua non videt destrui, de corde errorem deponat, et Deum verum cognoscens ac adorans, ad loca quæ consuevit familiaris concurrat” (“[when this same *gens*] sees that its shrines are not destroyed it will be able to banish error from its heart and be more ready to come to the places it is familiar with, but now recognizing and worshipping the true God,” I.xxx.106). Likewise, Anglian readers of Bede’s history, readers such as King Ceolwulf, are able to recognize in this lexical shrine—that is, the term *gens*—their own implied and familiar ethnic origins. But more importantly, they are also able to see therein a familiar familial unity available to them, the *gens Christianorum*. Christianity, through its genealogy out of Abraham and God the Father, becomes a mythographic vehicle for uniting divided peoples without forcing the ascetic abnegation of self and tribe upon them. In fact, it is as a unified *ethnie* that they come to spiritual election.

GENS AND THE “ENGLISH PEOPLE”

The phrase “English People” to translate *gens Anglorum* appears in the popular Penguin Classic translation as part of Bede’s title, as it does in Colgrave and Mynors’ famous scholarly edition.¹²⁵ But, recent historical and archaeological

scholarship has shown that this particular terminology is suspect.¹²⁶ However we might translate *gens Anglorum*, the Anglo-Saxon geopolitical situation at the time of the *adventus Saxonum* is far too complex; tribes, principalities, subkingdoms, and subdivisions too numerous; and the historical record too uncertain to accept unqualified the implications of the phrase “English people.” Furthermore, as Susan Reynolds points out, the term “Anglo-Saxon” and its Latin equivalent “seems to appear in surviving native sources only from the late ninth century on.”¹²⁷ Thus, if “English” refers to a combination of Germanic tribes, then we cannot accept the general appellation “English” in regard to an Anglo-Saxon collective until at least the late ninth century—long after Bede’s death. Even in the early eighth century, Bede did not include the Saxons, English or continental, in the ethnic designation *gens Anglorum*.¹²⁸

The adjective “English,” as the *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us, had “already lost its etymological sense ‘of or belonging to the Angles’ (as distinguished from the Saxons)” at its first appearance in the English tongue. The word which translates in these two editions as “English” is “Anglorum” and is used by Bede at times to describe only the Angles—“Orientalium Anglorum” (“of the East Angles”).¹²⁹ In his second book of the *HE*, Bede describes the conversion of Edwin as occurring in “annus dominicæ incarnationis DCXXVII ab aduentu uero Anglorum in Britanniam annus circiter CLXXXmus” (II, xiv.186). That is to say, Edwin was converted “in the year of the incarnation of the Lord 627 and in fact about 180 years after the coming of the Angles to Britain.” Colgrave and Mynors translate, “...of the English to Britain.”¹³⁰ Sherley-Price has “of the English in Britain.”¹³¹ One hundred and eighty years before 627 A.D. is 447 A.D., which is “circiter” 449 A.D., the year in which Bede tells us Vortigern invited “Anglorum siue Saxonum gens” to Britain (I, xv.50).¹³² With “Anglorum,” Bede clearly refers to the continental Angles, or *Angli*. Interestingly, Bede uses the conjunction “siue,” which presents an option—as if to say, “Angles or Saxons, I’m not sure which.” Perhaps Bede is being purposefully vague in this first book, but in his second, he is not: he clearly refers to the Angles. The option *siue* seems to indicate the unreliability of indigenous tradition. Furthermore, in his *De temporum*, Bede notes that the eleventh year of Edwin’s reign marked the “adventus autem anglorum in brittaniā plus minus anno clxxx” (“arrival of the Angles in Britain, plus or minus 180 years”). Bede in both instances refers distinctly to the Angles, “Anglorum,” not to some loose affiliation of Germanic tribes.

One major complication in defining Bede’s *gens Anglorum* has been the Continental use of the term, especially by Gregory, as primarily an ecclesiastical designation. Wormald explains that the Gregorian nomenclature offered Angles and Saxons a view of themselves as a single people, the *gens Anglorum*, in Heaven. It is precisely this simultaneous presence of a terrestrial designation, the tribal *gens Anglorum*, and a heavenly designation, Wormald’s *gens Anglorum*, in which Bede sought to find significance. Bede, considering the origin of ecclesiastical

dominion over Britain at Canterbury and aware of Gregorian usage, may intend to suggest with the designation *gens Anglorum* the preeminence of Anglian leadership in both ecclesiastical and political affairs—the latter justified by the former.¹³³ After all, Bede does dedicate his work to a Northumbrian (Anglian) king, Ceolwulf. And, one might say, God showed favor to the Angles by converting them first of the Germanic tribes (as Bede tells it).¹³⁴ The Angles demonstrate election, which prepares them to minister to Britain's other *gens*. Thus, Walter Goffart points out that Bede is “predominantly concerned with Northumbria,” which is an Anglian kingdom.¹³⁵ With respect to the historical facts of the *adventus Saxonum*, Wormald cautions that “it is modern scholars, not the AngloSaxons, who fabricate the links between the invaders of Britain.”¹³⁶ True as this may be from an insular point of view, Continental usage shows that *gens Anglorum* was sometimes understood there to designate all the inhabitants of Britain.¹³⁷ In other words, this comprehensive designation is largely Continental, not insular. Continental lack of ethnic distinction ought to prejudice us against evidence offered by Continental writers, and to serve as a warning not to rely too heavily on Continental evidence to establish Bede's insular usage.

In all of Bede's work except the *HE*, Bede uses the word *gens* in all its inflections 1,030 times.¹³⁸ In the *HE*, he uses the term in all its inflections 255 times (about 25 percent of all use). By comparison, the Vulgate New Testament uses the term *gens* in all its inflections only 128 times. The genitive plural *Anglorum* appears in the *HE* 179 times, while in Bede's other work, only seventeen times. The nominative inflection of *Anglorum*, which is *Angli*, and all other inflections (save the seventeen occasions of the plural genitive, *Anglorum*) occur only eighteen times. The nominative inflection *Angli* is, in the vast majority of cases, used in reference to the continental Angles.¹³⁹ These figures indicate that Bede is not writing his *HE* about the Angles, *per se*, but about a *gens*. The difference is subtle but telling.¹⁴⁰ *Angli* refers most often only to the Angles, but the term *gens* is semantically ambiguous. We find very few instances in which *Angli* forms the subject of the sentence. In many more sentences, *gens* forms the subject of the sentence only to be qualified by *Anglorum*. That is to say, the vast majority of Bede's sentences are about an identifiable *ethnie*, a discrete community with its own culture, not about an uncertain portion of Angles. (One might similarly compare “a gang of men” and “men,” where the emphasis depends on an assertion of the collective noun.)

THE STORY OF THE *GENS ANGLORUM*

Identification of the *gens Anglorum* takes place not only at a lexical level, but also at the level of narrative. There is something in stories, Bede suggests, with which readers naturally identify themselves. He writes in his dedication to Ceolwulf, “*Siue enim historia de bonis bona referat, ad imitandum bonum auditor sollticitus*

instigatur...” (“Should history tell of good men and their good estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good”).¹⁴¹ Bede says here that listeners will imitate a historical protagonist, and that stories of the past therefore ought to respond to the language of morality.¹⁴² To tell his story, Bede relies in part on images from Scripture, which in that context demand allegorical interpretation, but in Bede are used historically and locally. In new guise, these images trail into Bede’s historical narrative a tradition of allegory, thus reforming local history into religious (that is, Scriptural) history. Bede’s account of the *adventus Saxonum* is mediated, as James Campbell has pointed out, “by his believing that he ought to give the version [of events] which best demonstrated the truth of his faith rather than that which best corresponded to the [historical] truth...,”¹⁴³ Bede feels no absolute bond to a “purely objective history” of his own national or ethnic origins.¹⁴⁴ In his tale of the pagan *gens Anglorum*, Bede uses language that points not only to the unity of the pre-covenant Angles, but also to their worthiness for the Faith. Writing to Ceolwulf, Bede notes that from the Angles come “tota Nordanhymborum progenies” (“all Northumbria’s descendants,” I.xv.50). All Northumbrians are related by their common descent from Angles. The first leaders of the Angles (“Duces ...eorum primi”) were Hengist and Horsa, who were descended from the pagan god, Woden, “cuius stirpe multarum prouinciarum regium genus originem duxit” (“from whose lineage the ruling race of many provinces drew its origin”).¹⁴⁵ The Northumbrians, then, are Angles whose leaders, in a chain of unbroken tradition, are still descended from Woden. As David Dumville reminds us of this Northumbrian genealogy, “Bede speaks as if of a family. We are therefore in the presence of an ideological statement.”¹⁴⁶ Bede notes also that unlike the ancient homelands of the Saxons and *Iutae*, the homeland of the Angles “ab eo tempore usque hodie manere desertus” (“from that time and to this day remains deserted,” I.xv.50). Whereas the tribes of the *Iutae* and Saxons are divided between those *Iutae* or Saxons in Britain and those still on the continent, Bede declares that the Angles are united, whole, and integral.¹⁴⁷ The Northumbrians, Bede tells us, consider themselves not only descended from a god, but also undivided and unified. Their origins are divine, and they are a single *ethnie*. They also speak one language, the “gentium linguis... Anglorum” (I, xvi), or the language of the race of the Angles. This invokes the prototypical portrait of tribal identity in Genesis, “Ecce, unus est populus, et unum labium omnibus” (11:5).

Intriguingly, this implicit association with the defining moment of the tribal dispersion at Babel seems to play further in Bede’s description of the *gens Anglorum*. Consider Genesis 10:5, “Ab his divisæ sunt insulæ gentium in regionibus suis, unusquisque secundum linguam suam et familias suas in nationibus suis” (“From these were the islands of the nations [or races] divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations”).¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Bede divides the races of the island after their tongues and their families

(I.i.16). Linguistic, territorial, and familial elements find semantic association through this biblical description of *gens*—the same semantic association they have in Bede. A people and its common voice (that is, its canon of songs and stories) are configured coextensively. In Latin, this common voice is called a *lingua gens*, and equates a people with its language, and thus with its song.¹⁴⁹ The model implied to two millennia of Christian and Jewish readers a homology between the limits of race and the limits of literature—the voice of a people, the voice of a nation. Thus does the ethnic relate to language and literature. Moreover, there is an implication that the *lingua gens Anglorum* is somehow angelic. According to Origen, each tribe at Babel

was handed over (in proportion to the greater or less departure from the east which had taken place among them, and in proportion to the extent in which bricks had been converted into stones, and clay into bitumen, and building carried on out of these materials) to angels of character more or less severe, and of a nature more or less stern, until they had paid the penalty of their daring deeds; and they were conducted by those angels, who imprinted on each his native language, to the different parts of the earth according to their deserts: some, for example, to a region of burning heat, others to a country which chastises its inhabitants by its cold; others, again, to a land exceedingly difficult of cultivation, others to one less so in degree; while a fifth were brought into a land filled with wild beasts, and a sixth to a country comparatively free of these.”¹⁵⁰

As their language defined them, so did their angelic guardian; and the Angles were portrayed by Bede as having their election confirmed in their speech, in Heaven, in angelic patronage, and in their history.

Bede calls the incoming tribes “advenae,” newcomers, as opposed to “indigenae,” indigenes (I, xv). Most translations render *advenae* as “foreigners.” But Bede tells us that even the native Britons were foreign to the island; indeed, they “vindicarunt” (laid claim to, appropriated) the southern portion of the island after sailing from Brittany (I.i.16). “Indigenæ,” as Isidore of Seville explains, “sunt inde geniti, et in eodem loco nati, ubi inhabitant” (“Indigenes are conceived there, born in that same place where they live”).¹⁵¹ “Advenæ,” Isidore further explains, “autem vel incolæ adventicii perhibentur, sed permanentes” (“Newcomers, however, are held to be resident aliens, or, if you will, those who come from abroad, but persist in staying”).¹⁵² At one point, the Britons, too, were newcomers.¹⁵³ Thus, “indigenae” seems to indicate those born in southern Britain, the Britons of Vortigern’s time. “Advenæ” is translated as “newcomers” earlier in the chapter by Colgrave and Mynors: “Susceperunt...qui aduenerant” (“they received..., those who had newly arrived”) becomes “The newcomers received...”—why they do not keep this translation of “advenæ” is unclear.¹⁵⁴

When the Saxons arrive, “Initio ergo certamine cum hostibus, qui ab aquilone ad aciem uenerant” (“They began straight away battling with the enemy, who had come from the north to the battle’s edge,” I.xv.50, my translation).¹⁵⁵ This enemy is presumably the Pictish *gens*, the “gentium aquilonalium” (“race [or tribe] of the north”) of I.xiv.48. The Picts are not called “indigenæ,” but neither are they called “advenæ,” yet they are as *foreign* to the Britons as are the Saxons, *lutæ*, or Angles (in the sense that the Picts are of another tribe). “Advenæ” designates the people who are newly arrived, and although their foreignness is implicit, we ought to recognize that foreignness was a quality even the indigenes shared. The *gens Anglorum*, on account of their foreignness to Britain, are allotted equal claim to the stewardship of Britain. Although they are racially only a tribe among tribes, they are distinguished ethnically by their election.

Another related semantic qualification of Anglian identity concerns the *domus*, or the home to which the Angles come. The newcomers are granted land in the east of the island by the Britons. After making a treaty with the Picts, they attack the Britons and scatter them. Bede says, “At ubi hostilis exercitus exterminatis dispersisque insulæ indigenis domum reuersus est” (“But when the army of the enemy had dispersed and exterminated the indigenes of the island, it returned home,” I.xvi.52, my translation).¹⁵⁶ Bede calls this land the enemy has been granted a *domus*, a home.¹⁵⁷ At home in Britain, we might well consider this enemy indigenous. Isidore tells us that “Domus unius familiæ habitaculum est, sicut urbs unius populi, sicut orbis domicilium generis humani” (“A home is the habitation of one family, just as a town of one people, and just as the world is the abode of the human race”).¹⁵⁸ The Angles, descended from one source and sharing a *domus*, are portrayed as a family. Bede then recounts the battle of Mons Badonicus. After a digression concerning Germanus, who comes from across the water, Bede returns to the story of the warring tribes: “Interea Saxones Pictique bellum aduersum Brettones iunctis uiribus susceperunt...” (“During that time, the Saxons and the Picts had joined forces and were making war upon the Britons,” I.xx.62). The Angles are absent. Bede, silent earlier on whether the newcomers were Angles or Saxons, now declares explicitly that the belligerents are Saxons. Meanwhile, the absent Angles, it seems, are at peace in their new British *domus*. In other words, Bede seems to use the term “domus” for the residence of the British Angles to imply that the British Angles are to be considered an ensconced, homogenized, unified, unscattered, indigenous people. Again Bede suggests the primacy of the Anglian tribe over the other tribes of Britain.

According to what we read in Bede, we know that the *gens Anglorum* were newcomers to the island who suddenly found themselves at home, unlike the belligerent *gens Saxonum*. They are not Saxons, they are in fact another *gens*. And their language, the Anglian tongue, is neither British, Irish, Pictish, nor Latin. Richard Hodges claims that the “sources for seventh-century England are essentially ethno-history written for an explicit purpose.”¹⁵⁹ What is Bede’s

explicit purpose? One difficulty of assessing it lies in the complexity of the lexical evidence. The terms Bede employs to organize individuals during his account of the *adventus Saxonum* are primarily *gens*, *natio*, *populi*, *adventus*, and *res publica*. (English translations are of little help in establishing Bede's possibly systematic application of these collective terms.) Clearly, Bede was not ignorant of Roman polity and its various constitutions. The clearest examples of this come in his dating of individual chapters in the *HE*. In them, he recognizes the *reipublica*, the state or body politic; the *civitas*, the city; the *patria*, or fatherland; the *populus*, the people or population; and the *natio*, or nation.¹⁶⁰ In his *Præfatio*, Bede declares to Ceolwulf that his is a "historia...nostræ nationis" (history of our nation) but also concerns "maxime nostræ gentis virorum inlustrium" (the most famous men of our race). His subjects seem therefore to be both the *gens* and the *natio*. In these datings, he rarely employs the term *gens*. Bede's consistency suggests that he does not arbitrarily call a collective a *natio* where *gens* might also seem appropriate.

PICTS, IRISHMEN, AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Bede makes ethnic and political qualifications of indigenous collectives by carefully employing certain terms throughout his narrative with some precision. In his first book, Bede describes the coming of the Irish (interestingly, they are called *progressiones* not *advenæ*): "Scottorum nationem in Pictorum parte recepit" ("[Britain] received the Irish nation into the Pictish district," I.i.18, my translation).¹⁶¹ Earlier, in his description of the coming of the Pictish race (*gens*) to Hibernia or Ireland, Bede relates that there the Picts find the *gens Scottorum* (the Irish race). They ask the Irish race for permission to settle in their land, Ireland ("in partibus illis"). That is to say, these Scythian Picts ask the Irish people of Hibernia if they might settle in part of their territory. The Irish refuse, and Bede comments correctively that the island is extremely large, extending south as it does to Spain. The Irish then tell the Scythian Picts of a land to the east, a land across the water. If they like, the Irish say, the Picts might make their territorial home there. The Picts do, eventually asking the Irish for wives, since they brought no women with them. The Irish consent on condition that in case doubt ever arises, a king should be elected from the female royal line. At this point, one might surmise, the Scythian Picts intermarry with the Irish women. In other words, as *gens*, the Picts begin to lose racial distinction.

Unable, therefore, confidently to assert the racial identity of a Pictish *gens*, and because they now seem to be ruled by kings, Bede describes a Pictish *natio*. Since the Picts have a mixed ethnic identity—namely, Irish and Pictish—their identity as a governed people must be predicated on their constitution as a *natio*, as a political combination of *gens*. When the Irish arrive as an independent group, Bede says that the Irish settle "inter eos" ("among them"), that is, among the Picts. If Bede refers to the Picts as a *natio* because they no longer claim a racial identity

(having married Irish women), then why are the Irish who arrive later in Britain accorded the same ethnic epithet? Under Reuda, the “*Scottorum nationem*” (“Irish nation”) is received by Britain “in *Pictorum parte*” (“into the Pictish part”). Surely the Irish, not having intermarried with another *gens* in this narrative, ought to be termed not a *natio*, but a *gens*. Bede makes mention of the fact that the British Irish take only a part of the Pictish district. Is there a relation between a *natio* and the partial occupation of foreign territory? In this vein, consider the etymology of the name of the British Irish, Dalreudini, which suggests there may be.

Bede writes that “a quo videlicet duce usque Dalreudini vocantur, nam lingua eorum daal partem significat” (“clearly, they are today called Dalreudini after this king, since in their language ‘daal’ signifies a part”). The name of the collective contains its defining element, partition. The British Irish illustrate this political partition in at least two ways: they inhabit a part of the Pictish lands, and they are divided between the Irish in Britain and the Irish in Hibernia—Bede’s Irish are only a part of the entire Irish *gens*. Like the Scythian Picts, the British Irish are not united with their originary tribe: they are separated—as are the Saxons and *lutae*. One characteristic in this narrative which continues to distinguish the British Irish from the Picts in this passage of Bede’s is their “lingua,” their language. Note the tense: Bede says that “hodie” (“today,” or at this time—that is, Bede’s time), “daal” signifies (present tense) a part. The Irish nation of British Dalriada (there is also an Irish Dalriada in northeast Ulster) continued in the time of Bede to speak their native language.¹⁶² And language, as we have noted, along with territory, is an essential element in racial and ethnic differentiation. But as we have seen, partition from one’s homeland appears in Bede to render the emigrant group a *natio* in which ethnic identity begins to blur.

In Bede’s next passage, the terminology becomes more complex. So far in describing the coming of the Picts and Irish, Bede’s choice of terms suggests the defining conditions for his employment of the term *gens*. To review, as a *gens*, the Irish inhabit their homeland, or *patria*, of Hibernia. The Irish *gens* is then visited by members of the Pictish *gens*. Once these Scythian Picts establish themselves with Irish wives in Britain, and once it is clear they are ruled by a king, they come to be called a *natio*. When some of the Irish *gens* arrive in Britain under Reuda, they are also termed a *natio*. As if to emphasize this distinction, Bede says, “*Hæc autem proprie patria Scottorum est*” (“[Ireland] is, however, the proper homeland of the Irish,” l.i.20).¹⁶³ Separated from their *proprie patria*, their proper homeland, this indigent portion of the Irish *gens* becomes a *natio*. Yet once the expatriate Irish *natio* is ensconced in its new *patria*, a British *domus* as it were, it is soon called a *gens*. Bede further qualifies these Irishmen: these Irish are not necessarily *advenæ*, as pointed out above, but those who are *egressus* (emigrants, those who go out). What is the difference? The precise meaning of this identifying terminology can best be assessed by considering the Irish and Pictish advent narrative.

Before describing the advent of a part of the Irish in Britain, Bede writes, "Procedente autem tempore Brittania post Brettones et Pictos tertiam Scottorum nationem..." ("However, after some time passed, Britain receives [*recepit*], after the Britons and Picts, a third nation of Irishmen," I.i.18, my translation). In an earlier passage the three groups had been called *nationes*. Then Bede describes the advent of some of the Irish *gens*, the pristine and healthful character of Ireland, and that Ireland is the proper *patria* of the Irish *gens*. Next Bede writes, "ab hac egressi, ut diximus, tertiam in Britannia Brettonibus et Pictis gentem addiderunt" ("after this going-out [from Ireland], as we have said, they were added to the Briton and Pictish races as the third race in Britain," I.i.20, my translation).¹⁶⁴ In the earlier passage, Britain receives (*recepit*) the three nations, much as one might receive another into one's home or take something on oneself. As neither the Britons nor the Picts (nor the Irish) are indigenous to Britain, Britain is said to receive them rather than to generate them (*gens* is related to Latin term for generation). But once the three nations make their homes in Britain, they are no longer visitors. The children of the settlers, the next generation as it were, are generated by this people in a new homeland. In Bede's second passage, then, all three are instead called *gentes*, races of Britain. A confusion of terminology arises because Bede uses terms which are appropriate to the condition of a collective only at certain points in his narrative. The Irish *addiderunt* ("had been added") to the other *gens* at a point in Bede's short narrative when he is looking back on, in a past tense, rather than describing, in the present tense, the course of events. Britain *recepit* ("receives") the Irish nation in the present tense. The Irish *gens* of Bede's day at some point *addiderunt* ("had been added") in a past tense.

In sum, foreign *gens* set out for Britain, *nationes* arrive and make a *domus*, thus making the land their *patria*, and thereafter become indigenous races. Originally, it appears, incoming races are characterized by their racial identity as *gens*. But once these *gens* qualify that racial identity with intermarriage or by an attempt to establish a new *patria*, they are described ethnically as incoming *nationes*. Only after establishing themselves in their new *patria* are they called *gens* again. These postnation *gens* are distinguished in part, as Bede points out, by their language—a language tied to their racial origins, or, as Bede precisely puts it, their "gentium linguis." Of course, they are also distinguished by their roots, or "stirpe," by the narratives of ethnogenesis which describes their ancestry in one or another foreign *patria*. Finally, according to this paradigm, we can observe that the Angles speak their own language and have left no portion of their *gens* waiting on the continent—while the Saxons and the *luta*e have. This suggests that the Angles have moved as an entire people, as *gens*, as the Israelites did during the Exodus, not as a group of marauders, exiles, adventurers, or scouts, that is, as *nationes*. Unlike the Irish, Picts, Jutes, or Saxons, the Angles have a rightful and consistent claim as an originary British *gens*.

BEDE'S PROBLEM OF WATER

With the arrival of the various tribes in Britain (I, ii), Bede describes the geographical boundaries which he will use throughout book one to help define the physical limits of the *gens Anglorum*. Although Bede has established the Angles as an originary *gens*, the issue of *patria* requires that some state apparatus or a consolidating language operate within territorial boundaries. To further define and contain a *gens*, then, Bede makes reference to boundary water: rivers and seas. Mayr-Harting writes, "In the process of settlement...one point stands out above all others—the importance of rivers in determining the patterns and in providing the essential means of communication which knit settlements together." Geographical boundaries were essential to the limits of community, and thus to the stories that record and give import to those boundaries. According to Mayr-Harting, "The area of many of these early kingdoms was defined by strongly marked geographical features." He also notes that the Forth served as the boundary between the Angles and the Picts, the Clyde was the border of British Strathclyde, and that the Humber "became...a political boundary of great significance."¹⁶⁵ It is also pertinent that baptism in water distinguishes the Christian from the pagan. The actual fact of water is important, but its appearance in narratives needs to be considered also for its symbolic value. It is not surprising, then, that in the *HE* Bede separates races from races, from organizations, or from states by rivers and seas. For example, at the beginning of [chapter two](#), Bede writes that the consulate of Rome was divided from the "Germanorum Gallorumque gentes" ("German and Gaulish races") by the Rhine river.¹⁶⁶ Caesar considered these confederations *nationes*, largely a geographical designation and not a racial one.¹⁶⁷ The confluence of race and geography here speaks to the collapse of technical and symbolic value in the language of race. Intriguingly, the *legiones* of Caesar are divided from the Britons by the Channel. Once Caesar crosses the Channel, he separates himself from the race of Britons by driving them beyond the River Thames. The Picts come from across the sea, as do the British Irish, the Angles, the *lutae*, and the Saxons—and, presumably, the Briton *advenæ*.

The image of a geographical boundary, such as a river or a sea, is essential to the point: it bespeaks a wholly natural manifestation which divides one people from another. Typically, as pointed out in the story of Alban, narratives of ethnogenesis confess the divine (that is, naturally occurring) origins of a people. In a sense, the image of boundary water invokes an environmental demarcation of the extent of a race's purview. As the example of Alban showed, these demarcations play a significant role in the progress of Christianity. The most famous example of boundary water in the *HE* has to be Bede's opening description of Britain. Britain, he tells us, is an "oceana insula" ("an island of the ocean," I.i. 14). Fifty miles of water separate it from its nearest neighbor. All newcomers, by crossing the sea, are therefore automatically and unquestionably separated from

their originary *patria*—in other words, and very importantly, they are not *extending* their homeland, but *changing* it.

In another example, when the Saxons and Picts in confederation make war upon the Britons in chapter twenty of book one, a chorus of Celtic voices speaking in affirmation of the divine drives the fearful Saxons and Picts into a river. In “una vox omnium,” the Celts shout “Alleluia” with the aid of the intriguingly named Germanus and drive their enemies into “flumen quod transierant” (“the river they had crossed”). The river now between the two contenders, the fight is not renewed. Belligerence, according to the logic of this passage, is also subject to boundaries set by water. As well, when Germanus arrived, his “ventorum furores uela non sustinent” (“sails could not resist the fury of the winds”), and the ship was overwhelmed by the waves (I.xvii.54).¹⁶⁸ Christianity in early Britain, according to the logic of this narrative, also appears subject to boundaries set by water.¹⁶⁹

Bede rarely says that a people inhabit an area. He says instead that they originate in that area. The difference lies in the distinction between *indigenæ* and *advenæ*. The only true indigenes—those who are not separated from an originary, populated homeland—are the Angles. In all of the *HE* there are only four instances of the verb *inhabitare*, two of which explicitly qualify the Northumbrians, the “Nordanhymbrorum gentes, id est eius quæ ad borealem Humbræ fluminis plagam inhabitat” (Northumbrian races, that is those who inhabit the region north of the River Humber [II, v]).¹⁷⁰ These qualifications alert us to a significant problem for Bede. This is the problem of the river Humber, which separates Bede and his people from the mass of Angles living south of it. Bede’s consistent qualification of the Northumbrian *gens* and the use of the verb *inhabitare* seem to be an attempt to claim an exception to the tribal division inherent in the image of a river.

Although Bede is defining the ethnic constitution of the British Irish and British Pictish *gens*, he is faced with the simple fact that the Humber separates the mass of Angles from the Northumbrians. As we have seen, both the Irish and the Picts in Britain are said properly to belong to a distant, populated, overseas *patria*—the former to Ireland, the latter to Scythia.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, the Northumbrians, Bede claims, do not. The Northumbrians are descended from the Angles whose *patria* “Angulus dicitur” (“is called Angulus,” I.xv.50), and is deserted. In fact, Bede makes the line of descent abundantly clear. In his famous passage on the origins of the Germanic tribes in Britain (I.xv.50), he lists them thus: “Orientalis Angli, Mediterranei Angli, Merici, tota Nordanhymbrorum progenies, . . . ceterique Anglorum populi sunt orti.” The East Angles, the Middle Angles, the Mercians, all the descendants of the Northumbrians . . . , and the other Anglian peoples originate (*orti*) in Angulus. But whereas Bede does not qualify the East Angles or Mercians, for example, he does qualify the Northumbrians with an explanatory phrase—“id est illarum gentium” (“that is, those races”). In other words, the East Angles, Middle Angles, Mercians, and various Anglian peoples are originary and need no qualification of ancestry because they are all contained in one *patria*

bounded by water. But because the Humber divides the Northumbrians from the remainder of the Angles, Bede must constantly emphasize that the races who live north of the River Humber are *gens* descended from, that is related to, the *gens* of the Angles; that they are a *natio* settled away from their proper homeland.¹⁷² According to the ethnographic logic of the *HE*, having moved across the water, the Northumbrians are, like the British Irish *gens* and British Pictish *gens*, separated by water from their proper *patria* and their originary *gens*. Bede qualifies and thereby incorporates the Northumbrians into the Anglian confraternity by constantly associating them directly with the *patria* south of the River Humber and the Angles who live there.

According to Bede, that which differentiates the Northumbrian *gens* from the Irish and Pictish *gens*, aside from language, is their descent from a territorially ensconced Anglian *gens*. To put it another way, the Northumbrians are admitted into the confraternity of Angles due to their common ancestry and entirely British *patria*. And this means considering the land north of the Humber as a component of a larger territory which includes the land south of the Humber. It means considering as a single territory two territories separated by water: the logic of Bede's narrative therefore demands the conceptual unification of at least these two distinct territories. What unites the Anglian races, then, is their *nomen*, *patria*, and ancestry. Bede has drawn a line of descent, a familial line, which unites the East Anglians, the Middle Anglians, the Mercians, various Anglian peoples, and the Northumbrians in spite of the problematic Humber. All of these peoples are the *gens Anglorum*. And since we know from Bede's account of the Saxon and Pictish excursions against the Britons (I.xx) that the *gens Anglorum* are not of the same *gens* as the Saxons, we can conclude with some certainty that the *gens* (not *gentes*) *Anglorum*, at least until the arrival of Augustine, are to be understood as the unified, discrete, identifiable, and pagan Anglian race. They are not the English, but they are a unified people. Until the Angles receive the faith through Augustine, it is the originary and unified pagan Angles who alone among all the *gentes* of Britain are fit to receive Christianity.

It is very important to note, though, the fact that Bede never denies the pagan association of *gens Anglorum*. He does not erase the pagan history of the Angles with their newfound Christian faith.¹⁷³ In fact, the ethnic divisions of the pagan past available in Bede's first twenty-three chapters are precisely those which allow for and maintain the eventual unity of Anglian Christianity in Bede's narrative of Anglian Christian ethnogenesis—a common name, a common ancestry, and a common homeland bounded by water. Bede has prepared the ground in which the seed of faith will be planted. Only in sustaining this dual identity of pagan and Christian is the *gens Anglorum* offered a historical continuum reaching back into its origins. In a larger sense, Bede's distinction between Angles and Saxons and the downplay of that distinction under the aegis of Canterbury offers us a developmental paradigm by which we can approach notions of ethnic and

collective identity registered in the imagery of Anglo-Saxon textual culture. But specifically, Bede alerts us to the social or collective identity of the *gens Anglorum*, an identity which we can reasonably assert was not extended along geopolitical lines. One need only compare the stories of Anglian and Hebrew election—the exodus of Israel and the exodus of the Angles, the crossing of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Channel, the Promised Land and bounteous Britain, for example—to recognize how Anglian identity and Christian identity will be paralleled in Bede’s work. In the rest of the *HE*, Bede seems to suggest that those who reject these typological implications of the Anglian tribal past—their own divinely established ethnic history, in fact—are doomed to moral and political failure. Thus Bede’s *HE* needs to be understood as more than an uncertain historical record charting the mythic progress of an institution. The *HE* describes how earthly success can be attained: attend thoughtfully to the tribe’s ethnogenesis and accept, as is natural for an Angle, Christianity. Bede’s aim is not so much to record events, but to illustrate through a suggestive narrative how in the main those of the upper class who attain to Christ are rewarded with fame, success, and eternal life. It is the success of Bede’s effort at textualizing this double helix of ecclesiastical and familial bonds that will permit Alcuin, over sixty years later, to appeal to King Æthelred on behalf of “a double bond of kinship [by which] we are all fellow citizens of one city in Christ: that is, as sons of Mother Church and as natives of one fatherland.”¹⁷⁴

Finally, the ethnic narrative of the *HE* has two important effects on textual culture. First, these twenty-three introductory chapters contextualize Anglian moral identity in terms of a shared ethnicity. Through a narrative of ethnogenesis, Bede implies that the ethnic group as it is defined by its traditions, is thereby responsible for carrying out God’s law. Do well, and God will reward the *ethnie*; do poorly, and God will punish the *ethnie*. According to this logic, one’s individual moral progress affects the progress of the entire *ethnie* and only one’s own *ethnie*; and the *ethnie* is prior to its Christianity. This relation of the individual’s morality to the health of his or her ethnic collective will be employed by the Alfredian *World History*, and especially by Archbishop Wulfstan in his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. A second effect the ethnic narrative of the *HE* had on later textual culture is that while it set ethnic limits on the progress and benefits of faith, it also gave an ethnically distinct people a secure textual identity which, prior to its writing, had existed only piecemeal or not at all. The *HE* buttressed Anglian identity not only through an appropriate lexicon and an engaging narrative of ethnic origins, but through the mere fact of its existence. Apparently for the first time, Anglians had a written history which permitted a new way of transmitting a complex communal identity. Bede’s *HE* rendered local identity within a Roman tradition. By codifying Anglian identity in textual form, Bede created an authoritative kernel of English tradition which would be continually translated and reconceived, voiced again by successive communities fulfilling the narrative logic of race.

APPENDIX: GREGORY AND THE ANGLIAN SLAVES

1. From the anonymous monk of Whitby, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave. Cambridge University Press, 1968; pp. 90–91. Dated by Colgrave to 704 x 714 A.D. Translation by Colgrave.

Quod omnino non est tegendum silentio, quam spiritualiter ad Deum quomodoque cordis incomparabili speculo oculorum nostram providendo propagavit ad Deum conversionem. Est igitur narratio fidelium, ante predictum eius pontificatum, Roman venisse quidam de nostra natione forma et crinibus candidati albis. Quos cum audisset venisse, iam dilexit vidisse eosque alme [albe] mentis intuitu sibi adscitos, recenti specie inconsueta suspensus et, quod maximum est, Deo intus admonente, cuius gentis fuissent, inquisivit. Quos quidam pulchros fuisse pueros dicunt et quidam vero crispas iuvenes et decoros. Cumque responderent, “Anguli dicuntur, ille de quibus sumus,” ille dixit, “Angeli Dei.” Deinde dixit, “Rex gentis illius, quomodo nominatur?” Et dixerunt, “Ælli.” Et ille ait, “Alleluia. Laus enim Dei esse debet illic.” Tribus quoque illius nomen de qua erant proprie requisivit. Et dixerunt, “Deire.” Et ille dixit, “De ira Dei confugientes ad fidem.”

(So we must not pass over in silence how, through the Spirit of God and with the incomparable discernment of his inward eye, he foresaw and made provision for our conversion to God. There is a story told by the faithful that, before he became Pope, there came to Rome certain people of our nation, fair-skinned and light-haired. When he heard of their arrival he was eager to see them; being prompted by a fortunate intuition, being puzzled by their new and unusual appearance, and, above all, being inspired by God, he received them and asked what race they belonged to. (Now some say they were beautiful boys, while others say that they were curly-haired, handsome youths.) They answered, “The people we belong to are called Angles.” “Angels of God,” he replied. Then he asked further, “What is the name of the king of that people?” They said, “Ælli,” whereupon he said, “Alleluia, God’s praise must be heard there.” Then he asked the name of their own tribe, to which they answered “Deire,” and he replied, “They shall flee from the wrath of God to the faith.”)

2. From Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B.Mynors, eds. and trans., *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969; pp. 132–35. Dated to 731 A.D. Translation by Colgrave.

Nec silentio praetereunda opinio, quae de beato Gregorio traditione maiorum ad nos usque perlata est, qua videlicet ex causa admonitus tam sedulam erga salutem nostrae gentis curam gesserit. Dicunt quia die quadam, cum aduenientibus nuper mercatoribus multa venalia in forum fuissent conlata, multi ad emendum confluxissent, et ipsum Gregorium inter alios aduenisse, ac uidisse inter alia pueros uenales positos candidi corporis ac uenusti uultus, capillorum quoque forma egregia. Quos cum aspiceret, interrogauit, ut aiunt, de qua regione uel terra essent adlati; dictumque est quia de Brittaniam insula, cuius incolae talis essent aspectus. Rursus interrogauit utrum idem insulani Christiani, an paganis adhuc erroribus essent implicati. Dictum est quod essent pagani. At ille, intimo ex corde longa trahens suspiria, "Heu, pro dolor!" inquit, "quod tam lucidi uultus homines tenebrarum auctor possidet, tantaque gratia frontispicii mentem ab interna gratia uacuam gestat!" Rursus ergo interrogauit, quod esset uocabulum gentis illius. Responsum est quod Angli uocarentur. At ille: "Bene" inquit; "nam et angelicam habent faciem, et tales angelorum in caelis decet esse coheredes. Quod habet nomen ipsa prouincia, de qua isti sunt adlati?" Responsum est quia Deiri uocarentur idem prouinciales. At ille "Bene" inquit "Deiri, de ira eruti et ad misericordiam Christi uocati. Rex prouinciae illius quomodo appellatur?" Responsum est quod Aelle diceretur. At ille adludens ad nomen ait: "Alleluia, laudem Dei Creatoris illis in partibus oportet cantari."

(We must not fail to relate the story about St. Gregory which has come down to us as a tradition of our forefathers. It explains the reason why he showed such earnest solicitude for the salvation of our race. It is said that one day, soon after some merchants had arrived in Rome, a quantity of merchandise was exposed for sale in the market place. Crowds came to buy and Gregory too amongst them. As well as other merchandise he saw some boys put up for sale, with fair complexions, handsome faces, and lovely hair. On seeing them he asked, so it is said, from what region or land they had been brought. He was told that they came from the island of Britain, whose inhabitants were like that in appearance. He asked them again whether those islanders were Christians or still entangled in the errors of heathenism. He was told that they were heathen. Then with a deep-drawn sigh he said, "Alas that the author of darkness should have men so bright of face in his grip, and that minds devoid of inward grace should bear so graceful an outward form." Again he asked from the name of the race. He was told that they were called Angli. "Good," he said, "they have the face of angels, and such men should be fellow-heirs of the angels in heaven." "What is the name,"

he asked,” of the kingdom from which they have been brought?” He was told that the men of the kingdom were called Deiri.

“Deiri,” he replied, “De ira! good! snatched from the wrath of Christ and called to his mercy. And what is the name of the king of that land?” He was told that it was Ælle; and playing on the name, he said, “Alleluia! the praise of God the Creator must be sung in those parts.”

3. Thomas Miller, ed. and trans., *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Early English Text Society, o.s. 95. London: Oxford University Press, 1890 (reprint, 1997); pp. 96–97. Late ninth century. Translation by Miller.

Nis us þonne se hlisa to foreswigienne, þe be þam eadigan Gregorie þurh yldra manna segene to us becom, for hwilcum intigan he monad wære, þæt he swa geornfulle gymenne dyde ymb þa hælo ure þeode. Secgea hi, *þæt* sume dæge þider niwan come cypemen of Brytene ⁊ monig cepe þing on ceapstowe brohte, ⁊ eac monige cwomon to biggenne [ða ing, þa gelomp þætte Gregorius between o re eac þider cwom, ⁊ þa geseah between o er þing cype cneohtas þær gesette: wæron hwites lichoman ⁊ fægres ondwilitan men ⁊ æ ellice gefeaxe. Ða he da heo geseah ⁊ beheold, þa frægn he, of hwelcon londe o þe of hwylcre þeode hy brohte wæron. Sægde him mon, þæt heo of Breotone ealonde brohte wæron, ond þæs ealondes bigengan swelcre onsyne men wæron. Eft he frægn, hwæ er þa ilcan londleode cristne wæron þe hi þa gen in hæ ennesse gedwolan lifden, Cwæ him mon to ⁊ sægde, þæt heo hæ ne wæron; ⁊ he da of inneweardre heortan swi e sworette ⁊ þus cwæð: Wala wa: þæt is sarlic, þætte swa fæger feorh ⁊ swa leohtes ondwilitan men scyle agan ⁊ besittan þeostra aldor.

Eft he frægn, hwæt seo þeod nemned wære, þe heo of cwomon. Ondswarede him mon þæt heo Ongle nemde wæron. Cwæ he: Wel *þæt* swa mæg: for on heo ænlice onsyne habba, ⁊ eac swylce gedafona, þæt heo engla æfenerfeweardas in heofonum sy. þa gyt he fur or frægn ⁊ cwæ: Hwæt hatte seo mæg, þe þa cneohtas hider of lædde wæron. Þa ondswarede him mon ⁊ cwæð, þæt heo Dere nemde wæron. Cwæ he: Wel þæt is cweden Dere, *de ira eruti*; heo sculon of Godes yrrre beon abrogdene, ⁊ to Cristes mildheortnesse gecegeðe. Ða gyt he ahsode hwæt heora cyning haten wære: ⁊ him mon ondswarede ⁊ cwæ, þætte he Æll hatan wære. Ond þa plegode he mid his wordum to þæm noman ⁊ cwæ: Alleluia, þæt gedafena, þætte Godes lof usses scyppendes in þæm dælum sungeð sy.

(We cannot pass over in silence the report which has come to us by the tradition of older men about the blessed Gregory, as to the reason why he was warned to take such zealous care for the salvation of our people. They say, that one day merchants came there fresh from Britain, and brought to market many wares, and many also came to buy those things. Then it happened that Gregory among others also came there, and saw among other objects for sale, youths placed there: they were men of fair complexion and handsome appearance with beautiful hair. When he saw them there and regarded them, he asked from what land or race they were brought, and was told that they were brought from the island of Britain, and that the inhabitants of this island had this appearance. Again he asked, whether the people in that country were Christians or still living in heathen error. They replied and told him that they were still heathen; and he then sighed deeply from the bottom of his heart and thus spoke, "Alas the pity! it is grievous that such fair forms and men of such bright faces should be owned and possessed by the prince of darkness."

Again he asked what the people was called from which they came; they answered that they were called English. He said, "That may well be; for their look is angelical, and also it is fit that they should be joint-heirs with the angels in heaven." Then he further asked and said, "What is the people called, from which the youths were brought here?" They answered him and said that they were named Deiri. He said, "Deiri is well said, *de ira eruti*; they shall be rescued from God's wrath and called to the mercy of Christ." Further he asked their king's name; and they answered and said that he was called Ælle. And then he played on the name in his words and said, "Alleluia, 'tis fit that the praise of God our creator should be sung in those parts.")

CHAPTER THREE

King Alfred's Christendom

Sapientiam omnium antiquorum exquiret et in prophetis vacabit
narrationem virorum nominatorum conservabit et in versutias
parabolarum simul introibit.

—Sirach 39:1–2¹

Bede's story of ethnogenesis shaped Anglo-Saxon ethnic identity into an authoritative, textual kernel of tradition. One hundred and seventy years after Bede, this textual kernel of tradition was refashioned, and thus the ethnogenesis of the Anglo-Saxon people during the reign of King Alfred was reconceived. My contention in this chapter is that we can observe the results of that reconception in a number of texts produced by Alfred and his circle, especially the Alfredian translation of Paulus Orosius' *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, translated anonymously sometime between 889 and 899 A.D. (hereafter *World History*).² Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis was newly expressed within the context of Christendom. Commentators on Alfred or the Alfredian canon do not tend to discuss the relevance of Christendom, an ethno-religious order of identity shaped by Charlemagne and imported into Anglo-Saxon England during the reign of Alfred.³ As I illustrate below, Christendom is not the same thing as Christianity. It is within Christendom that the Alfredian *World History* expresses a reconfiguration of the kernel of ethnic identity planted by Bede. To the extent that this reconfigured kernel announces the origins of the Anglo-Saxon people, it is germane to the textual culture in which it is expressed. But my contention in this chapter is limited to the *World History* and to some Alfredian texts which most clearly demonstrate a changed appreciation of ethnic origins, yielding a distinct sense of Alfredian ethnogenesis.

There are major differences between the Latin text of Paulus Orosius' *Seven Books of History against the Pagans* (hereafter *Historia*) and the Anglo-Saxon version (the *World History*), especially the manner in which each treats Alaric the Goth and the sack of Rome. Whereas Bede appears to have maintained an almost exclusively Anglian view of ethnic identity, Alfred seems to see common ethnic

identity as extending to all the Christian Germanic inhabitants of Britain. I begin with the Old English Bede and ethnic identity. Then, in the bulk of the chapter, I discuss the confluence of ethnic identity and Christianity, which results in Christendom, in the *World History*. And finally, I look to some treatments of the Vikings, especially to Alfred's treaty with Guthrum, to show how Alfredian identity construed them almost exclusively within the context of Christendom, that is, in an appeal both to ethnicity and to Christianity.

A NEW ETHNOGENESIS IN THE OLD ENGLISH BEDE

The Old English translation of Bede's *HE* offers a piece of evidence essential to what appears to be a ninth-century reconfiguration of Anglo-Saxon ethnic identity. In his Old English translation of Bede's *HE*, King Alfred's translator renders the story of ethnogenesis at I, xv thus:

Comon hi of þrim folcum am strangestan Germanie, þæt of Seaxum ⁊ of Angle ⁊ of Geatum. Of Geata fruman syndon Cantware, ⁊ Wihtsætan; þæt is seo eod þe Wiht þæt ealond onearda .⁴

(They came from three peoples, the strongest in Germany, that of the Saxon, and of the Angle, and of the *Geat*. From the *Geats* are descended the Kentmen and the Wiht-settlers; that is the tribe which dwells in the island of Wiht.)

The Latin of I, xv reads, "Aduenerant autem de tribus Germaniae populis fortioribus, id est Saxonibus, Anglis, Iutis" (The came from three very powerful Germanic tribes, the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes).⁵ The Old English terms "Angle" and "Seaxum" are clearly taken from Bede's Latin original, but "Geatum" does not appear to be the Old English reflex of Bede's "Iutis." In fact, "the name *Geatas* represents the anglicized form of the Latin *Getae*."⁶ *Getae* is the same as Goth; Cassiodorus, historian to the Goths, presented his history as that of the *Getae*, the nomenclature Jordanes maintained in his own later Gothic history.⁷ In 1676, Aylett Sammes, author of *Brittania Antiqua Illustrata*, and following Robert Sheringham's *De Anglorum Gentis Origine Disceptatio* (1670), wrote of this passage that "the Gothes and Getes were one and the self-same nation."⁸ Or, in terms of the new Bedan ethnogenesis, the three incoming tribes were the Angles, the Saxons, and the Geats—meaning the Angles, the Saxons, and the Goths. Sammes was merely the first to articulate what would continue to be the standard opinion of Anglo-Saxonists concerning the origins of the English, although not entirely in these terms, until the early nineteenth century. But standard opinion was challenged in 1817, when N.F.S. Grundtvig identified Hygelac, the famous Geat of *Beowulf*,

with Chochiliacus, a Dane mentioned by Gregory of Tours, by Saxo Grammaticus, and in the *Liber Historiæ Francorum*.⁹

This discovery sparked a lengthy debate about the historical identity of the Geats, which had as its prime candidates the Gautar of Sweden and the Jutes of Jutland, as well as their historical relation to the Danes. In 1967, Jane Acomb Leake virtually ended the debate by convincingly showing that

by the end of the seventh century there existed a strong tradition that in the farthest northern reaches of the known world there lived the Getes, the noble, ancestral Germanic tribe, so renowned in war that they could trace their lineage to Amazons, Mars, and Bellona—a people who produced heroes of superhuman strength and size, bearlike in their shaggy appearance, and who dwelt among the monstrous races and fabulous creatures of the North.¹⁰

The Geats appear to have been a mythological result of “misinterpretations of Latin works of literature, geography, and theology dating from the classical and early Christian periods.”¹¹ If the Geats existed at all, ninth-century Anglo-Saxons appear to have known them in relation to a long mythographic tradition. In fact, they had originally been a tribe of Thrace which appears throughout Greek literature, sometimes as Scythians or as Dacians. Herodotus calls the Scythians the bravest of all Thracians. In later geographical tradition, “the Getæ became part of the potpourri of ‘Scythian’ tribes that now included the fabled people of Herodotus,” including the Androphagi and the shape-changing Neuri.¹² The Romans used *Getæ* to refer first to the Visigoths, then to the Goths generally. Julian the Apostate was “the first to use *Getæ* for *Gothi*.”¹³ On the authority of Orosius and Cassiodorus, Jordanes identified the Geats with the Goths, and attempted “to bring into harmony accounts that the Goths came out of Scandinavia and yet are really the ancient Getæ of Scythia and Thrace.”¹⁴ Strabo and Pliny put the *Getæ* in the furthest northern reaches of the world, and both identified the *Getæ*, later identified with the Goths, with the *Daci*, later identified (for example, by Isidore of Seville) with the *Dani*, or Danes. Orosius writes, “*Dacia ubi et Gotharum*,” which, according to Leake, “became a standard designation for Denmark in the Middle Ages.”¹⁵ In the seventh century, Isidore of Seville continued this hybrid tradition, as had Martianus Capella, Priscian, and St. Ambrose before him. This tradition may explain why Bede declared that the Picts came from Scythia: perhaps he imagined it to be near Denmark.¹⁶ Denmark was generally understood by early medieval geographers, including Anglo-Saxons, to be the ancestral home of the Goths, or Geats. King Alfred, on the authority of Orosius, identified Gothia, ancestral home of the Goths, with Gotland in Scandinavia.¹⁷ Perhaps this identification of Geats with Goths and with Danes helps to explain why Chochiliacus, who is called a Dane in the historical sources

(for example, “Dani cum rege suo nomine Chlochiliachum”), was thought to be identical with Hygelac, who is called a Geat in *Beowulf*.¹⁸

It appears that it is to these Getes or Geats of ethnographic textual tradition that not only *Beowulf*, but also the translator of Bede refers. With respect to the ethnic identity of the Geats in *Beowulf*, Leake concludes that the poem “is in the largest sense an English national epos, one that embraces Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Danes alike, and hence one that produces in a subtle way the ethnic unity of the English nation.”¹⁹ As Roberta Frank has shown, the Carolingian interest in a common Germanic heritage brought the Goths into the community of “a *gens teudisca*, a community of Germanspeaking people.”²⁰ With the term *Geat*, the ninth-century translator of Bede is asserting the common racial heritage of the Danes and the AngloSaxons in their mutual Gothic origins. Perhaps he, too, is subtly producing an ethnic unity. In any event, the ethnographic myths of origin of the Longobards, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Angles all begin with the mythic Gaut-Géat. Geat heads the list of many Anglo-Saxon genealogies, and is also the founder of the Amal lineage, whose progeny includes Theodoric the Great, Emperor of Rome.²¹ Asser wrote that the pagans worshipped Geat as a god.²² Ethnographic tradition thus validates a link between Germanic ethnicity and Roman *imperium*. It is important to note here that these stories of origins, including that of the Geats, are not records of tribal memory or historical fact, but a hybrid of both. Nominal origins are part of an *ethnie*’s Romanized mythography. As Peter Heather points out with regard to Gothic genealogies, for example, “A suitable genealogy provides a *de facto* king with part of his legal title to rule, so that royal genealogy will often part company with biological fact.”²³ And yet ethnic identity, as was clear through the efforts of Bede and Boniface after him, was not a sufficient marker of group identity. There also had to be a religious component. My contention is that the translator of the *World History* found this ethno-religious identity in Christendom. Christendom, described more fully below, was an order of identity established by Charlemagne and which, like the Geatish genealogies, combined Germanic *imperium* with Roman Christianity.

THE CORROBORATING EVIDENCE OF GENEALOGIES

An area of evidence most clearly expressive of this combination of Christianity and Germanic ethnic identity is regnal lists or genealogies. These much-neglected texts are often called into evidence merely for their testament of pagan survival, rather than for a textual intermarriage of Germanic and Christian lines of familial descent.²⁴ But as David Dumville has argued, a genealogy “can be an expression of something wider than kingship...it can announce belief in the existence of a racial grouping.”²⁵ It can express identity. As described in the previous chapter with respect to Boniface, racial identity—bone and blood—sometimes required an additional spiritual element. And, as the Book of Ezra demonstrates, those tribes

without genealogies can be rightfully excluded from the larger social and religious community (Ezra 2:62).²⁶ These two communities are combined in common ancestors. Hermann Moisl, following David Dumville, notes that “the Northumbrian dynasty...used common descent from Woden to express its political relationship with other provincial royal houses in the seventh century.”²⁷ But the addition of biblical ancestors is important. An Anglian genealogy of King Edward in Rochester Cathedral, *Textus Roffensis*, for example, relates Edward to Alfred to Finn to Geata to Beaw to Scyf to Shem to Noah and ultimately back to Adam.²⁸ Here, in a very serious and important declaration of the origins of the Anglian royal family, are combined Germanic familial identity, including Geat, with Christian familial identity in a direct and literal understanding of what it means to be part of the (Germanic) Christian *gens*, part of Christendom.²⁹

In a West Saxon genealogy of the same manuscript, we read in the vernacular that “Ingeld wæs Ines bro or” (“Ingeld was Ine’s brother”), and the genealogy concludes with the Latin, “Et Adam primus homo. Et pater omnium qui est Christus” (“and Adam, the first man. And father of everyone who is a Christian”).³⁰ Perhaps in apposition to Alcuin’s famous retort to his Northumbrian brothers, *quid Hieneldus cum Christo?* (“What has Ingeld to do with Christ?”), this genealogy firmly places Ingeld in familial relation to Christ, offering his Germanic descendants, Angles and Saxons and Goths, as well as their Christian wards common filial identity through Adam. This genealogy also combines vernacular with Latin, rendering Germanic origins in Old English and Christian origins in Latin. Thus vernacular and Latin textual traditions are also combined in a statement of common origins. In Cotton Tiberius B V, we read in a genealogy of the West Saxon kings (“regum Occidentalium Saxonum”) that “Se Scef wæs Noes sunu” (“Scef was Noah’s son”). Here is another macaronic statement of origins combined without qualification from the registers of Christian and Germanic identity. This same genealogy also concludes with a Latin reference to Adam, “pater omnuim qui est Christus” (“father of everyone who is Christian”).³¹ All Angles and Saxons, distinct races by Bede’s reckoning, were thus presented as related through both Adam and Scef (Scyf)—through both Christian and Germanic lines. It may be that adherence to Christian practice and belief, or rather Christendom, offered an Anglo-Saxon not only Christian identity, born of Latin textual culture, but also a Germanic identity, which was nonetheless intimately tied to an ancient Christian past. Much as Charlemagne had declared the unity of all *ethnie* within his domain through the Christian religion (although that unity did not forge a single *gens*), these genealogies seem to say that all British Angles and British Saxons are literally related through Christianity. These genealogies imply the existence of an order of identity which understands a common religious past and a common ethnic past.

CHRISTENDOM

The Old English word for this ethno-religious order of identity is *Cristendom*. The word first appears in texts of the ninth century and is used in the *World History* thirty-seven times. Moreover, it is within the context of Christendom, a community infused with a sense of *imperium* since its establishment by Charlemagne, that the *World History* seems to take its shape. The definition of the Old English term is complicated by its varying uses over the course of three hundred years. The *OED* relates that the Latin equivalent of the term is *christianitas*.³² Yet, Judith Herrin in her detailed study of Christendom notes of the term *cristendom* that at least in the ninth century, “it has no exact parallel in the Latin or Greek words used previously to designate Christian adherence, *Christianitas* or *oikoumene*.”³³ *Christianitas* denotes the Christian religion or the profession of the Christian religion, Christian morality, the community of Christians, the quality of being a Christian, administering sacraments, ecclesiastical power, and spiritual jurisdiction. It does not properly refer to a political community comprised of Christians. And yet, *Christianitatis* was intriguingly employed as an honorary title of the Kings of the Franks, as was the superlative *christianissimus*.³⁴ Although *Christianitas* covers a very wide semantic range, it is in this last respect that it seems closest to the ninth-century use of *cristendom* I am exploring.

The Old English also appears to have covered a wide semantic range. J.R.Clark Hall defines the term *cristendom* as “‘Christendom,’ the church, Christianity.”³⁵ The *OED* defines *Christendom* as “the state or condition of being Christian.” But this abstraction is insufficient to differentiate “Christendom” from “Christian,” for example, for which there are two Old English words, *cristendom* and *cristen*, respectively. Similarly, Clark Hall’s definition elides two distinct semantic fields, the Church and Christianity, which Old English expresses mainly as *cyrca* or *cirice* and *cristen*, respectively. For example, in a dedication of a church, we read that a consecrated church “is gehaten *ecclesia* þæt is nama ealles cristenes folces forþam þe on cyricean wyr gegæderod cristen folc to leorninde, and to beganggenne þa þinc þe gebyra to cristendome and þær to underfonne godes flæsc and godes blod” (“is called *ecclesia*, which is the name of all Christian people, because in a church Christian people become united in order to learn and to celebrate the community brought to Christendom, and there to receive God’s flesh and God’s blood”).³⁶ Here, the community of the faithful is properly called *ecclesia*, or church. In a late Saxon homily attributed to Wulfstan, “In Cena Domini,” we read that priests are to bring men into the community of the church, and that these men “gymon þære cyrcan, þæt is, heora cristendomes” (“take heed of the church, that is, of their Christendom”).³⁷ Yet contributing an admirably succinct comment on this distinction between Christendom and a church, a gloss on the OE Bede reads, “*ecclesiam* folc” (“church people”).³⁸

The *DOE* offers four major definitions of *cristendom*. First, it is thought to mean “Christianity; with the definite article: the Christian faith.” Second, it is thought to mean “an individual’s Christian faith.” Third, it is thought to mean “Christendom: body of persons or territories under Christian rule.” And fourth, it is thought to mean “membership in a Christian congregation.” These definitions are themselves nuanced, so that, for example, the first definition allows *cristendom* to be variously understood as the gospel, the Christian faith, administration of religious rites, and the rites themselves. It must be remembered that these definitions are generalized descriptions of about 266 occurrences of the term in the Anglo-Saxon corpus, which includes texts produced hundreds of years apart. Generalizing such disparate uses in order to come to a definition can often lead to difficulties. For example, consider a late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon penitential which records, “Ic bidde þe ærest for godes lufon ⁊ for his ege þæt þu þin lif mid rihte lybbe ⁊ þinum Drihtne mid ea medum hyre ⁊ þinne cristendom ⁊ in fulwiht wel healde” (“I bid you first for love of God and for dread of him, that you live your life with rectitude and that you follow your lord with obedience and hold fast to your *cristendom* [*DOE*, lead a Christian life] and baptismal oaths”).³⁹ Here *cristendom* appears to denote a sense of faith, of the beliefs one holds as a Christian. The *DOE* notes that *cristendom* combined with the verb *healdan* means “to lead a Christian life.” While this definition offers convenient, idiomatic modern English, it raises two difficulties. First, in the above passage, one would need to distinguish between living one’s life with rectitude and leading a Christian life—the passage seems to assert both distinctly. One consequence of such a distinction would be the unlikely implication that there were in Anglo-Saxon England two distinct codes of moral behavior, one implied by “rectitude,” one implied by “Christian.” And second, this definition does not accurately reflect the more precise Old English meaning, to hold well one’s Christian beliefs. The Old English is nuanced with a sense of possession clear in the pronoun *þinne* and more generally in the verb *healdan*. In this case, the necessary generality of the *DOE* prevents a full disclosure of the semantic range of the term by intimating it belongs with sorts of behavior, rather than with sorts of possessions.

With respect to the third definition, the *DOE* offers two variations. *Cristendom* can mean “a Christian country,” and it can mean “the Church, Christianity as a formal organization.” The one example given by the *DOE* comes from the first book of the *World History*, where we apparently see the term used in this sense. The translator writes, “Hwær is nu on ænigan cristendome...” (“Where is there now in any Christendom...”).⁴⁰ It is this denotation I wish to pursue. There are a number of other important examples which do not appear in the *DOE*. In the laws of Æthelred, we read, “æt is þonne ærest, þæt we ealle ænne God lufian ⁊ weor ian ⁊ ænne Cristendom georne healdan ⁊ ælcne hæ endom mid ealle aweorpan” (“This, then, is foremost, that we all love and worship one God and earnestly defend [*also denotes* inhabit, preserve] one Christendom, and each one (of us)

with all (the others) reject heathendom”).⁴¹ Here, a unified Christendom, like a defensible town or city, is held in theoretical opposition to heathendom. It seems to be conceived, at least in this third sense, as a domain or a community of believers. This echoes the use of *heathendom* in Alfred’s treaty with Guthrum. Similarly, in Ælfric’s homily for Ascension Day, we read “as wundra wæron nydbehefe on anginne cristendomes. for þan urh am tacnum wear æt hæ ene folc gebiged to geleafan” (“These wonders were a necessity in the dawning of Christendom. Thus through these signs was that heathen folk exhorted to belief”).⁴² Faith begets Christendom, which is also imagined as the Church, and, when established among a people, as its ethnic or national religion.

The term is intriguingly a compound of *cristen*, meaning Christian, and *dom*. The *DOE* does not describe the role of the suffix “dom” in *cristendom*, but does direct its reader to a separate entry for *dom*. At the head of its definition of *dom*, the *Dictionary* warns,

dom is often used as the translation of Lat. *iudicium* and ‘judgment’ is its polysemic equivalent But the senses of the word include ‘decree, ordinance, law,’ esp. in the plural, and reach out to ‘discernment,’ ‘sway,’ and ‘glory’ in such a way that it is often not possible to assign an occurrence to one sense in ModE without arbitrariness and the attendant loss of semantic richness.⁴³

In Latin, *iudicium* can mean a trial, a court, a sentence of a court, a decision, an opinion, the faculty of judgment or discernment, discretion, or tact.⁴⁴ Especially in Medieval Latin, it can mean the last judgment, as it is sometimes used in Scripture.⁴⁵ With this term there seems also to be some semantic breadth. Some of the glosses which the *DOE* records are tantalizing. *Dom* at some point glossed the terms *bracchium* (“arm”), *examen* (“examination”), *magistratus* (“magistrate”), *militia* (“military spirit”), and *responsum* (“answer”)—the last of which, *domas*, may be a scribal error for *demas*, or declaration. One common and particularly germane association of the term is with an area of jurisdiction. The *dom*, or area of jurisdiction, in *cristendom* implies a governed collective subject to a code of law or moral behavior. In sum, Christendom seems to have reflected a complicated integration of religious, legal, and communal identity in Anglo-Saxon textual culture. One text which seems to have been especially affected by the complex of Christendom is the *World History*.

COMPARING THE WORLD HISTORY TO THE HISTORIA

Produced by Alfred’s circle in the closing decade of the ninth century, this “compendious history of the world,” as Bosworth titled it in 1859, may have

contributed to the process by which Anglo-Saxons began to understand themselves as a single people constituted both ethnically and religiously.

Alfred is commonly thought to have buoyed a communal, insular identity by recasting that identity in more comprehensive moral terms. He thereby extended the franchise of Anglian and Saxon identities until their possible reconstitution as *Englisc*, as Sarah Foot has recently argued.⁴⁶ But as is rarely noted, this reconstitution of identity was effected almost entirely within an Augustinian historiographical tradition, which cast the past as a moral lesson, and thereby established a moral function for the *World History*. This silence in the critical literature is especially strange because Augustine himself asked Orosius to write the *Historia* as a historical defense of Christianity. The original work was explicitly Christian in aim, although not always in content (Christ and the Church are rarely mentioned in the Latin). What made Alfred's *Orosius* an especially potent contribution to an insular self-perception was its configuration of identity and morality within Christendom. Unique portions of the *World History*, especially with respect to the sacking of Rome, can be explained as an ethnic (especially Anglo-Saxon) response to Christian history; that is, a sense of Germanic community shapes the Latin into a story of the origins of Christendom. In this section, I first quickly review the textual history of both Orosius' *Historia* and the Alfredian *World History* in order to show that a comparison between the two is valid. Second, in order to set the stage for the laudatory Alfredian portrait of Alaric, king of the Goths and the conqueror of Rome, I briefly describe the cultural context of Orosius' original. Alaric, a hero in Alfred's version, appears as the scourge of God in Orosius' version. And finally, I compare Orosius' original to the Alfredian version in three respects: First, the attitudes toward the eternity of Rome; second, the descriptions of the sacking of Rome; and third, the portraits of Alaric. I conclude that the *World History* shifts the focus of the work from a Roman Christ to a Germanic Christendom. In doing so, it registers a pronounced shift in identity, an identity not only distinct from the Roman context of the original, but also an identity arguably distinct from those prevalent in seventh- and eighth-century Anglo-Saxon England.

Janet Bately, the most recent editor of the *World History*, has built a firm foundation for comparison with the *Historia*. Bately has established the manuscript history, the existence in England of Latin exemplars, and a Latin *Historia* close to the *World History*. Whether translated by a Cornishman, a Gallo-Roman, or a Welshman, the *World History*, which is extant in four Old English manuscripts in the West Saxon dialect, is overwhelmingly a West Saxon text—whether early or late is debatable.⁴⁷ There are four extant Old English manuscripts: 1) BL Additional 47967, also known as the Lauderdale or Tollemache Orosius; 2) BL Cotton Tiberius B i; 3) the fragment, Bodleian, Eng. Hist. e. 49; and 4) the fragment, Vatican City, Reg. Lat. 497, f. 71. The Latin version was not unknown in England. Helmut Gneuss lists two Latin manuscripts of the *Historia* which had

been owned or written in England, one from the last quarter of the eleventh or first quarter of the twelfth century, and a second from the second half of the eighth century.⁴⁸ Bately notes these as well as seventeen others which have some English connection. While the original Latin exemplar of the Alfredian translation has not been absolutely identified, it nevertheless bears a very close resemblance to Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana 627, and to three families of manuscripts identified by Zangemeister in his edition of the *Historia*.⁴⁹ With Zangemeister at hand, and with her work on the manuscript traditions of both the Old English and Latin versions, Bately has provided scholars with the ability “to reconstruct some of the major features of the Latin MS lying immediately behind the Anglo-Saxon translation.”⁵⁰

Except for the Othere and Wulfstan interpolation, the *World History* remains a relatively neglected portion of the Alfredian oeuvre. Bately, who is perhaps more responsible than anyone for bringing this nearly forgotten text back under academic scrutiny, has of necessity been more critical and editorial than theoretical in her work. The *World History* is one of the more revealing texts of Alfred’s program for reconstituting Anglo-Saxon identity, since it so clearly deviates from the original in one very important historiographical respect: its attitude towards Rome. In a comparison between the *World History* and the *Historia*, some of the more telling omissions and emendations confess not to a corrupted exemplar so much as they do to a specifically Anglo-Saxon historical program. With respect to the former, a misspelled proper name, for example, can often be credited to variations in the manuscript traditions of the Latin, as can, for example, the surprising death of Croesus in the *World History*. Bately explains,

In Book 2.vi.12, Orosius tells how Cyrus captured his enemy Croesus but granted him both his life and his patrimony: *Croesum cepit captumque et vita et patrimonio donavit*. According to Alfred, on the other hand, Croesus was not spared. On the contrary, we are told how Cyrus pursued him until he captured and slew him: *him Cirus wæs æfterfylgende oþ he hiene gefang ñ oferslog*. The key to this surprising falsification of events is provided by the reading of Riccardiana 627, I: *et vita et patrimonio damnavit*... According to this reading, Croesus was ‘condemned in respect of his life and patrimony’, i.e. he was put to death.⁵¹

Alfred’s translator seems merely to have followed the Latin exemplar’s *damnavit*. A second example of a faulty exemplar is the Latin manuscript tradition of accidentally rendering *Laomedon Mitylenaeus*, Laomedon of Mytilene, as two persons, which the *World History* also treats as two persons. A third example: the Latin exemplar also seems to have contained a marginal gloss describing the Dead Sea Fruit episode of I, iii, as it is known. Here, the story that the fruit around Sodom is turned to ash at the touch, “ac þonne hig man on hand nym, þonne weor a hig

to acxan" ("but when a man takes it in his hand, then it changes to ashes"), "was originally a [Latin] marginal gloss."⁵²

And yet there are important changes to the *Historia* which arise not from following a faulty or glossed Latin exemplar, but from editorial choices of the translator. One group of emendations concerns additions made in light of different historical traditions. For example, the geographical additions to the *World History* sometimes change the original in what Bately disparagingly terms "corrections." For example, Bately notes that where the *World History*

puts *mare Creticum* west of Crete, Or[osius' *Historia*] asserts that the Sicilian Sea is in this position. Whereas O[rosius'] H[istoria]...refers to *Gades insulae*, *Fortunatae insulae* and *Orcades insulae* (the last said to be thirty-three in number), [the *World History*] uses each instance in the singular 'pæt igland'. Whereas Orfosius' *Historia*] puts *Syria Palestina* east of *Aegyptus inferior* and *mare Nostrum* north, [the *World History*] shifts Palestine to the north and introduces *Sarracene pæt land* as the eastern boundary.⁵³

There are also additions which introduce entirely new information to the text. One such example, and perhaps the most severe, concerns the geography of the Continent. Bately writes, "Here changes are so radical that it is possible to consider the whole section [l.xiv–xxiv] as rewritten to conform, with certain exceptions, to the ninth-century situation as known to the author of [the *World History*] or his immediate source."⁵⁴ The Ohthere and Wulfstan interpolation is such a change. Another addition concerns the description of the source of the Danube, which may, as Bately suggests, have come from the more contemporary Isidore of Seville. But the changes which confess most radically to an Anglo-Saxon historical program are best exemplified in the Old English attitudes towards Rome in three respects: 1) the eternity of Rome, 2) the sacking of Rome, and 3) the portrait of Alaric.

OROSIUS' ORIGINAL PROJECT

The historiographical emendations and additions to the *World History* are clear only in relation to the tradition of the original. Orosius was commissioned by St. Augustine to write the *Historia* in response to the claims of influential pagans that Christianity and not paganism had consistently brought about suffering in the Roman Empire.⁵⁵ The *Historia* was set out as a grand defense of the Empire and its state religion, Christianity. Orosius tells the history of Rome so as to emphasize the difficulties under pagan emperors and the relative tranquillity under Christian emperors. Orosius argued, as his most recent editor Irving Raymond explains, that this pattern testified to the fact that the "Christian faith alone saved the Empire

from a worse fate at the hands of the barbarians, who at times acted as scourges of God.”⁵⁶ In this regard, it must be remembered that Alaric and his Goths were Christians, too, although heretical Arians. It was that spiritual relation, Orosius says, which mitigated the sack. But to fifth-century Romans, of course, the sack of Rome did not mean that Rome had fallen. The historian Procopius relates that when the Emperor Honorius heard of this death of Roma, he broke down in “violent lamentations,” thinking his favorite chicken, Roma, was dead. He was apparently much relieved to find out that the messenger had “merely meant that the Goths had taken Rome.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, rather than cause its downfall, Christianity in its own way had brought peace to the Empire. This argument rested on the contention that God’s plan for mankind included a peaceful Rome. Evidence for this was limited to Orosius’ observation that Christ had chosen to be born within the Empire as a Roman citizen.

Orosius’ first six books present the brutal history of Rome until the reign of Augustus, at which point the history of Rome changed markedly. In Book Seven of his *Historia*, Orosius explains the reason why Rome, a city absolutely central to his history, had prospered in the reign of Augustus:

Nec dubium, quin omnium cognitioni fidei inspectionique pateat, quod Dominus noster Iesus Christus hanc urbem nutu suo auctam defensamque in hunc rerum apicem provexerit, cujus potissime voluit esse cum venit, dicendus utique civis Romanus census professione Romani.

(“Neither is there any doubt that it is clear to anyone from his own knowledge, faith, and investigation, that it was by the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that this city prospered, was protected, and brought to such heights of power, since to her, in preference to all others, He chose to belong when he came, thereby making it certain that He was entitled to be called a Roman citizen according to the declaration made in the Roman census list,” VI.22, p. 429)

The census list is, of course, the census of Luke 2:1, “Now at this time Cæsar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken,” and by “the whole world” is understood the Roman Empire.⁵⁸ Christ was understood by Orosius to have been a Roman citizen, and the peace He is thought to have brought informed the standard interpretation of Luke 2:1, something we see in Bede and the *Glossa Ordinaria*, for example.⁵⁹ Consequently, the peace attendant on Christ’s coming was divinely ordained, as it was ordained that Christ should be a citizen of the most powerful and peaceful empire of the day. Christianity and a Roman Christ are, for Orosius, Rome’s salvation against the Germanic invaders.⁶⁰ This is the teleological argument Orosius promised to St. Augustine, and it is the argument which undergirds Orosius’ history.

Again, the opening of Book Seven of the *Historia* recounts, "Igitur anno ab Urbe condita DCCLII natus est Christus salutarem mundo adferens fidem, vere petra medio rerum posita" ("In the seven hundred and fifty-second year of the City, Christ was born and brought the religion that gives salvation to the world. He is in truth the rock placed in the center of things"). He continues, "Postquam redemptor mundi, Dominus Iesus Christus, venit in terras et Caesaris censu civis Romanus adscriptus est, dum per duodecim, ut dixi, annos clausae belli portae beatissima pacis tranquillitate cohibentur" ("After the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, had come to earth and had been enrolled in Caesar's census as a Roman citizen, the gates of war were kept closed, as I have said, in the happy serenity of peace," VII. 1, pp. 437–38). The twelve years of Augustan peace were the historical example which proved the benefice to Rome of Christ's coming. With the Incarnation comes a seamless connection between human history and God's plan: the pacific condition of the Roman Empire was ordained by God to be amenable to his Son's entrance into human history. His entry is recorded in a Roman census to mark the fact. That record is itself recorded in the Gospels to signify the relation of Christ's coming to the role of the Roman Empire in human history. Thus, Empire and Christianity for Orosius are symbolically intertwined. Orosius points to Caesar's elevation to Augustus on 6 January 725 A.U.C. (*ab urbe condita*, since the founding of Rome), which is recorded "so that the Empire of Caesar might be proven in every respect to have been prepared for the future advent of Christ," since "this is also the same day ... on which we observe the Epiphany" (VI.22, p. 310).⁶¹ Twenty-seven years later, "in the year when Caesar, by God's ordination, established the firmest and truest peace, Christ was born, whose coming that peace waited upon" (VI.23, p. 316). The census represents the participation of all "the great nations of the whole world" in one combined effort, and under one oath to Caesar. This, too, is mirrored in Christ's birth.

With Christ's arrival, Orosius says, all peoples are united "in the recognition of a common faith" (I.1, p. 68). In the course of history, as Augustine had argued concerning the city of God, the Christian Roman Empire became a home to all people, regardless of ethnic origin. Thus, Orosius writes, "No matter where I flee, I find my native land, my law, and my religion...all have the same law and nationality as I, since I come there as a Roman and Christian to Christians and Romans" (V.2, p. 280).⁶² The commonalty of this imperial Christendom allowed the disciples "to go about and speak as Roman citizens among Roman citizens" (VI.1, p. 351).⁶³ Benoit Lacroix notes about these passages "an important theme of Patristic thought: the messianic vocation of Rome pursuing its work of evangelization."⁶⁴ At the same time, the good or bad condition of Rome depended on the attitude which was commonly held by its citizens towards the Church.⁶⁵ Or, as Orosius writes, "When the course of the [Roman] world is peaceful, it is so because of those who believe, and when the world is vexed and disturbed, it is due to the punishment of blasphemers" (VII.3, p. 438).⁶⁶ Christianity and Empire

are inextricably linked. In short, the political condition of Rome at the time of Orosius' writing was a consequence of divine and secular history coming to a single point, the birth of Christ within the Empire. Furthermore, the later decline in the Christian faith in the face of the Incarnation was the cause of the Germanic invasion. For Orosius, the early history of Rome and Christianity demonstrated a fundamental link between the Roman Empire and the Christian religion.

OROSIUS GERMANIZED

But, the passages extolling the centrality of Rome to God's historical plan are excised entirely from the Alfredian translation. The one essential piece of historical evidence which firmly grounds Orosius' larger argument, the birth of a Roman Christ, is nowhere to be seen. It is not paraphrased, as are many other omitted chapters, and neither is it absent from any complete extant Latin manuscript. In fact, this is one of the rare points in the whole of Orosius in either version where the historical Christ is mentioned. One would expect that what has so often been described as a Christ-centered history would comment more elaborately on Christ, especially on His birth; but the Alfredian translator merely remarks in the midst of a longer passage at Vi, i, "þy geare þe Crist geboren wæs" ("the year in which Christ was born"). As best as can be determined, this reticence is not a case of a faulty exemplar, which suggests instead that it may be one of editorial choice. The omission—and it appears to be an omission—of Orosius' narrative and argument on the part of a ninth-century Anglo-Saxon may indicate an important shift in Anglo-Saxon associations with the historical image of Rome and Rome's relation to the Germanic invaders. The possibility of such a shift is corroborated in a number of other changes introduced into the Alfredian version, three of which I would like to address.

The first change concerns the state of Rome, whether she is at a low point, fallen, or decayed. Orosius argued that the divine logic of history brings empires to ruin at their height, "ut ueluti quodam iure succedentis aetatis debita posteris traderetur hereditas, ipsis quoque eandem tradendi formulam seruaturis" ("so that, in accordance with a certain law of succession which runs throughout the ages, posterity might receive the inheritance due to it—posterity which was fated to hand on the inheritance according to the same law," II.6, pp. 97–98). For an Anglo-Saxon of the Age of Alfred alert to this argument, it was clear that the power of Rome's empire had passed to posterity.⁶⁷ Thus, the translator of the *World History* faced an entirely different political reality than that faced by Orosius in 415 A.D. The slow, glacial fall of the Roman Empire, variously dated today to the sacking of Rome by Alaric in 410 A.D. or the deposition of the last Emperor by Odoacer in 476 A.D., naturally prompted the question of Rome's historical participation in the spread of the faith.⁶⁸ Orosius optimistically records in the Latin that Rome is first among *gens*, as Assyria once had been. He says that Rome is the "ultimum

imperium" ("the last Empire," VII.2, p.434). Since there have been four empires as there are four compass-points—Babylon in the East, Macedon in the North, Carthage in the South, and Rome in the West—Orosius does not, cannot, envision another.

For Orosius, the Empire had not fallen, it had simply been reprimanded by God. But for the *World History*, it had fallen:

Ond nu ure Cristne Roma bespric þæt hier e wealles for ealdunge brosnien, nales na for þæm þe hio mid forheriunge swa gebismrad wære swa Babylonia wæs; ac heo for hier e cristendome nugiet is gescild, æt ægþer ge hio self ge hier anweald is ma hreosende for ealddome þonne of æniges cyninges niede.

("Now, our Christians speak against Rome, because her walls decay with age,—not because she has been disgraced by pillage, as Babylon was: but Rome, for her *Christendom*, is even yet so shielded, that both she and her empire are fallen more from age, than by the violence of any king," II.4, p. 44)

The Latin (II.6) asks whether Rome suffers, but does not assert that Rome is "hreosende" (falling, in ruin). Bately notes that the Old English translator has replaced "an indirect question by a construction involving a causal clause," commenting that this "strengthens the parallelism between Rome and Babylon."⁶⁹ Unexpressed but implicit in Bately's comment is that this parallel between Rome and Babylon is that they are both fallen empires.

The second and third changes may have been directed more by ethnic than historical considerations. The translator of the *World History* who, possibly a West Saxon, would have been identified ethnically with the Goths rather than with the Romans, and religiously with Christendom. The ethnic relation of the Goths to the Germans is made explicitly in the *World History*, "nu, þa þa Gotan coman of þæm hwatestan monnum Gemanian" ("Now, the Goths come from the bravest men of Germany," I.10). Bede's ninth-century Old English translator wrote that from the Goths, or Geats, were descended the Anglo-Saxons: "Comon hi of þrim folcum am strangestan Germanie, þæt of Seaxum ⁊ of Angle ⁊ of Geatum." ("They came from three of the strongest tribes in Germania, those of the Saxons, of the Angles, and of the Geats").⁷⁰ The two changes in the *World History* germane to this ethnic identification with Alaric are: 2) the sacking of Rome is characterized as an entirely peaceful affair and 3) of all the consuls, emperors, and Kings in the *World History*, Alaric is called the most Christian king, *se cristena cyning*, the same terms used to refer to Oswald in the OE Bede, the only king so termed.⁷¹ Notably, *Christianissimus* is the Latin superlative used earlier to refer to Charlemagne and the kings of the Franks.

With respect to the second change, the sacking of Rome, Orosius understood the Goths to be federates of the Roman state. During the wars between the Emperor and the Goths, for example, the Goth Athaulf fought for the Emperor Honorius “pro defendenda Romana republica” (“for the defense of the Roman state,” VII. 43, p. 559). Orosius says not only that the Goths had been chosen by God to extend the power of the Empire, to act as its right arm, but also that the Goths then became “subiectos” (“subjects”) of the Roman Empire (I.16, p. 69). By way of comparison, Orosius describes the earlier sacking of Rome in 390 B.C. by the Gauls—whom Orosius also calls Goths: “Galli exstincto populo Vrbe deleta ipsum quoque Romae nomen in extremis cineribus persequentes” (“The Gauls, after wiping out the populace and destroying the city, continued to persecute the very name of Rome even when the city lay in ashes,” II.19, p. 132). Importantly, this earlier Gothic invasion did not precipitate Rome’s fall; and, by extension, Orosius seems to have assumed that Alaric’s invasion would not precipitate Rome’s fall either. The Gauls/Goths broke into the city, slayed the senators, fired the houses, and besieged the survivors. Only for one thousand pounds of gold, the little remaining in the desolate city, did they eventually quit the city.⁷² This episode appears meant to contrast the more benevolent attitude of the Goths under Alaric in the age of Christian emperors and perhaps to suggest God’s controlling hand. In his description of Alaric’s sacking, Orosius is intent to prove that “illa Urbis inruptio indignatione Dei acta quam hostis fortitudine probaretur” (“the storming of the City was due to the wrath of God rather than to the bravery of the enemy,” VII. 39, p. 545). Consequently, we are shown an Alaric who is always subject to the will of God.

The vast majority of Orosius’ account of the sacking is taken up with a narrative of a remarkable incident. Orosius relates that in the midst of the sound and the fury of the sacking, a huge Goth politely asks an elderly Roman virgin for her silver. The startled virgin hands over holy vessels, and sternly rebukes the massive Goth for daring to take the sacred plate of Peter, a comment which arouses the Goth’s latent religious inclinations. Running suddenly to ask direction from his commander, the pious Goth arranges that the vessels be carried in a procession by Romans and Goths together, who sing hymns as the gold and silver objects are carried devoutly overhead through the red streets of the burning and besieged city. Following this holy moment in the sacking of Rome, Orosius relates that the Goths spared all Christians and slaughtered all pagans. This, Orosius remarks, surely evinces the hand of God since even in crowds into which pagans had deviously insinuated themselves, falsely professing the Christian faith, the uncouth, barbarian Goths were somehow able to discern real Christians from these wily pretenders. On the third day—perhaps numerologically propitious—the siege ends and the Goths leave, having burnt only a small number of buildings. Those monuments which the Goths were unable to fire, Orosius says, were later stuck by lightning—another sure sign of God’s hand.

There are notable differences in the ninth-century narrative, especially as regards the firing of the city. The *World History* comments that “the Goths, for the honour of [Christendom], and through the fear of God, plundered there less a time, and neither burnt the city, nor had the wish to take from them their name.”⁷³ The translator then writes that “a burg ne bærndon,” which flatly contradicts Orosius’ Latin report. In fact, Orosius explicitly makes the point that what the Goths couldn’t burn, God did, since the firing of Rome is an integral part of Orosius’ evidence for divine retribution, but the effect of which is to portray the Goths merely as unthinking vehicles of God’s wrath. The firing of Rome is absent from the *World History*, and this suggests that Alaric’s active kingly clemency is of more symbolic interest to the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon translator than Alaric’s Orosian role as God’s unthinking instrument of divine retribution.

The third and final change in this context concerns this portrait of Alaric. Orosius was concerned with Roman identity, exclusive of Germanic identity, while the Alfredian translator was concerned with Christendom, an order of identity imbued with a Germanic history. As a Goth, Alaric was Germanic. In a very important passage concerning God’s plans for the sacking of Rome, Orosius writes that God chose the less barbaric of two Germanic chiefs then afoot in Roman territory, Alaric and Radagaisus. Although he noted that Alaric was, like most Goths, a Christian, he emphasized Alaric’s *romanitas*: “unus Christianus propiorque Romano et” (“a Christian and more like a Roman,” VII.37, p. 539). This was important to Orosius, since Orosius saw Rome eventually regaining divine favor with the help of Gothic federates amenable to Roman sensitivities. As further evidence of this view, Orosius ends his history with the story of Wallia, then king of the Goths, who asked the emperor Honorius to receive Gothic hostages as a pledge of Gothic support. The Goths, this seems to suggest, were to become Romans and Christians, bringing their strength of arms with them in support of their newly adopted Empire and religion.

The *World History*, on the other hand, substantially revises this portrait. The ninth-century translator comments that

God gedyde his miltsunge on Romanum, þa þa he hiora misdæda wrecan let, þæt hit þeh dyde Alrica se cristena cyning ⁊ se mildesta. ⁊ he mid swa lytle niþe abræc Romeburg, þæt he bebead þæt mon nænne mon ne sloge... ⁊ sona þæs on þæm þridðan dæge hie aforan ut of þære byrig hiora agnum willan, swa þær ne wear nan hus hiora willum forbærned.

(“God showed his mercy to the Romans, when he allowed their misdeeds to be avenged, and yet it was done by Alaric, the most Christian and mildest of kings. He sacked Rome with so little violence, that he ordered no one should be slain Soon after that, on the third day, they went out of the city of

their own accord; so there was not a single house burnt by their order," VI. 38, p. 156).

The Goths left of their own accord, not explicitly by God's hand. And not only was nothing fired in this sacking of Rome, but also no one was slain. It is extremely hard to imagine how a city like Rome could be sacked so gently. This improbable description nevertheless successfully shifts emphasis from Orosius' Roman Alaric to the Christian Alaric. In the ninth-century version, Alaric, "se cristena cyning," the most Christian king, exercises a wholly Christian clemency. The Alaric of the Old English has been raised in status to the exemplary king of Roman history—but at the expense of the logic of Christian history: in showing clemency, how precisely did Alaric effect divine revenge on Roman misdeeds? In a final twist on the *Historia*, the *World History* ends by recording that Alaric and the Goths stayed in Italy as rightful conquerors. The Goths in the Old English version are not subject to anyone.

For Orosius, the Goths were ultimately at the service of a nascent Roman Empire into which they were soon to be assimilated and taught *romanitas*. That this was of paramount importance to Orosius may be the object of the strange narrative of the religious procession of Goths and Romans. Yet for the translator of the *World History* writing at a time when Germanic Christendom was in the ascendant, Roman identity was, like Germanic identity, ultimately a reflex of ethnic boundaries and ethnic memory. Against this ingrained understanding had come Orosius' claim in the *Historia* that Christ was historically a Roman citizen, and thus tied implicitly and exclusively to the fate of Rome. But what role could the historical Christ play in the course of Western history after the fall of Rome? Orosius' history had simply not allowed for this eventuality: his was, in the end, a plea to the Last Empire for its spiritual reform. As the *World History*'s excised narrative of the birth of Christ may indicate, Rome was not considered—although it may have once been—the conduit for God's historical presence. Instead, the ninth-century *World History* was concerned to see Rome as the birthplace of Christendom, the community to which both Alaric and Alfred belonged. It was that shared identity that made the *Historia* relevant to ninth-century Anglo-Saxon England. Ethnically, Alaric was a Goth, and the Goths, or Getes, were a founding tribe of the Germanic people. From the strongest of the Goths came the English. The *World History* asserts the Germanic Christian salvation of Christendom in the person of Alaric, thereby proposing in storied form a very important (mythic) link between Anglo-Saxon England and the history of Christendom. The *World History* was created at an intersection of identities, at a time when the Roman past as it was expressed from within a fifth-century context was unable to speak coherently to the demands of the Germanic present. By underscoring the concord of Christian and Germanic identity in the person of Alaric, the most Christian of kings, the *World History* redounds to vernacular access to and Anglo-Saxon

identification with a historical Christendom, an order of identity that has left the senate and people of Rome far behind. The *World History* does not treat Rome or Greece as “the centre round which [history] revolves.”⁷⁴

CONCLUSION: CHRISTENDOM, KINGS, AND VIKINGS

A general emphasis on Christian kingship and Christendom seems to be the thematic aim of the *World History*. At the very least, this theme characterizes major points in the *World History* where it diverges from the *Historia*. Three examples stick out. First, the central narrative of the birth of Christ, which is excised from the *World History*, is replaced by the story of Caius, Christian nephew to Augustus, who took gubernatorial control of Syria. After coming to Jerusalem, the story goes, Caius refused to worship God. Augustus in turn failed to chastise Caius, and “Raþe þæs Romane anguld on þæs wordes mid swa miclum hunge þæt Agustus adraf of Romebyrig healf þe þearbinnan wæron” (“Soon afterwards, the Romans paid for this word with so great a famine that Augustus drove from Rome half that were within it,” VI. 1, p. 134). Here the failure of both kings has immediate and tangible effects on a people. Similarly, Tiberius, in Orosius’ view a much more enlightened king, brought news of Christ’s miracles to the Senate. The senate refuses to name Him a god since the proper administrative steps had not been taken in making the proposal. Tiberius, enraged at their obstinance, puts to death the majority of senators. The *World History* interpolates,

“Hu God þa þa mæstan ofermetto gewræc on þæm folce, ⁊ hu swi e hi his anguld on from heora agnum casere; þeh hit eallum þæm folcum of oþrum londum swa swiþe gewrecen ne wurde swa hit oft ær wæs!”

(“How God then avenged that very great pride upon the people, and how dearly they bought it from their own emperor! although it was not so greatly avenged upon all the people in other countries, as it often had been before,” VI.2, p. 134).

This is clearly a story of a fallen, heathen people who refuse to follow their king and to accept what Anglo-Saxons surely considered the historical reality of Christendom. Revenge was therefore rightly wreaked by God through the instrument of a king. The *World History* omits Orosius’ explanation of the historical role of Christ in the rise of Rome, instead emphasizing the tangible relation between a good, Christian king and the prosperity of his people in the complex of Christendom. The history of Rome in the *World History* seems to stand as an historical example of the result of the power of Christendom’s leaders over heathens. Christendom, as the *World History* has assured its readers, establishes and maintains peace among various ethnies.

In a second example, the *World History*, mindful of the defeat of the Empire by Alaric and perhaps of the *translatio imperii* to Charlemagne, reads,

Hu blindlice monege þeoda spreca ymb þone cristendom þæt hit nu wyrse
sie þonne hit ær wære, þæt hie nella ge encean oþþe ne cunnon, hwær hit
gewurde ær þæm cristendome, þæt ænegu þeod oþre hierre willum friþes
bæde, buton hierre þearf wære, oþþe hwær ænegu þeod æt oþerre mehte fri
begietan, o e mid golde, o e mid seolfre, oþþe mid ænige feo, buton he
him underþiedd wære.

(“How blindly many people speak about [Christendom], that it is worse now than it was formerly. They will not think nor know, that, before [Christendom], no [people], of its own will, asked peace of another, unless it were in need; nor where any [people] could obtain peace from another by gold, or by silver, or by any fee, without being enslaved,” 1.10, p. 31)

Clearly, one point implicit here is that the Goths, who are said earlier in this passage to be more powerful than the Romans, kindly allow the Romans peace without tribute or enslavement. This is completely irreconcilable with Orosius’ original notion that the Goths were subject to the Romans. Most importantly, the *World History* uses the term *cristendom* to extend a sense of the necessary role of religion in ethnic unity and peace. Clearly, Christendom, not Christianity, is thought to be “worse now than it was formerly,” since the faith itself is presumably unchanged. But here the *World History* moves into the present, into the ninth century, not least in this passage’s echo of the *Preface* to the *Pastoral Care*. Within the Christendom of the *World History*, as opposed to before the onset of Christendom, *ænegu þeod*, any people, could presumably obtain peace without fee or enslavement. Christendom offers a (religious) context within which ethnic or tribal tensions can be pacified.

In a third example, the importance of Christendom to the general prosperity is shown in another emendation to the *Historia*. After the devastations wrought on Rome by the lecherous and intemperate governments of Caligula and Nero, Claudius takes the purple. Orosius reports that at that time, Peter had come to Rome and brought Christianity with him. Suddenly, Rome was imbued with a common peace: “Claudius mox ut confirmavit imperium, magna atque adhuc Romae incognita usus clementia” (“Soon after establishing his rule, Claudius exercised a clemency previously unknown in Rome,” VII.6, p. 447) The *World History* instead reports, “Ac mid þon þe hie þæs cristendomes onfengon, hie wæron swa geþwære ⁊ swa gesibsume þæt hie ealle forgeafon þæm casere þa fæhþe þe his mæg hæfde wi hie ær geworht” (“But when they embraced *Christendom*, they were all so mild and so peaceable, that they all forgave the emperor and the mischief that he had formerly done them,” VI.4, p.136). As Bately

notes of this remarkable passage, the clemency in the *World History* is offered by the people, not by the Emperor, as it is in the *Historia*. This popular act of clemency and the subsequent peace of the Empire indicates that for the translator of the *World History*, the people bear no small measure of responsibility for the prosperity of the state. This has one important ramification. In this passage, the people's desire to forgive ("forgiefan") clearly arises from the appearance of Christendom. And since the peace of the state is a major goal of the leader, it follows that Christendom induces favorable political and social conditions.

These three examples show that the Roman past in the *World History* may be called to testify to the power of Christendom's faithful leaders over heathens. Such power may have been of interest to a ninth-century AngloSaxon witnessing the ingress of viking invaders. In other words, the constant faith of a king determines the fate of his people. One tantalizing example of this sentiment comes in the *Life of St. Cuthbert* when an apparition of St. Cuthbert speaks to Alfred before the battle of Edington in 878. The apparition declares in language reminiscent of God's promise to Abraham, "To you and your sons is given the whole of Albion. Be just, for you are elected king of all Britain."⁷⁵ Fulco of Rheims had expressed precisely these sentiments in a letter to Alfred in about 886. He writes that Alfred attends "to the good of the kingdom divinely entrusted to you...with your mind continually on religious matters..."⁷⁶ For Fulco, Alfred's attention to religious matters is intimately tied to his success as a king. The role of the faithful king in maintaining the health of Christendom also plays a large part in Asser's *Life of King Alfred*. Asser emphasized Alfred's lone influence on the course of his kingdom: "Yet once he had taken over the helm of his kingdom, he alone, sustained by divine assistance, struggled like an excellent pilot"⁷⁷ The faithful king, these texts tell us, can bring victory to a kingdom, win out over a heathen enemy, and bring prosperity to the land. It is precisely this aspect of Christendom which may have been so appealing to a ninth-century AngloSaxon audience.

Ethnically, the Goths are ancestors to both the Anglo-Saxons and the viking Danes. As such, the two *gens*, as Asser calls them, are ethnically related. Consequently, it is no surprise that these two peoples are not differentiated by the ethnogenesis of the Old English Bede nor by the ethnic lines of descent in extant genealogies. Instead, they are differentiated primarily through the lens of Christendom. In his treaty with Guthrum, Alfred bade the heathen Vikings to convert to *Cristendom*. The treaty has Guthrum and his men promise "þæt hi ænne God lufian woldon ñ ælcne hæ endom georne aworpen" ("that they would love God at once and each one would earnestly cast aside heathendom").⁷⁸ In accordance with the treaty, Guthrum and thirty of his most important men were baptized three weeks later at Aller near Athelney. Three things about the treaty ought to be noticed here. First, the rejection of heathendom, *per se*, implies both the adoption of Christendom and the currency in textual culture of the notion of Christendom.⁷⁹ Second, this treaty clause testifies to Alfred's belief in the power

of a text and Christendom to authorize peace. And third, this pacific call to Christendom may be an attempt to invoke the familiarity inherent in its ethno-religious identity—as Boniface similarly called Continental Saxons to Christianity. In other words, as a law-abiding Germanic Christian like Alfred, as a citizen of Christendom, Guthrum might be less likely to renege on his promise and to renew his belligerence. Alfred Smyth comments, “The spiritual parentage established by Alfred over Guthrum at Aller must inevitably have implied some level of cultural and political superiority,” which resulted generally from the animosity of western Christendom towards pagans. First, it is important to note that “viking” is not an ethnic designation. Asser consistently terms the Vikings “paganos,” pagans.⁸⁰ It appears therefore to be not so much a question of culture as of religion. Second, Alfred’s sponsorship of Guthrum may not have been inflected with a sense of superiority as much as it may have been a genuine offer of welcome into the religioethnic family of Christendom. The “spiritual parentage,” in Smyth’s terms, indicates the possible establishment of a familial identity between Vikings and Anglo-Saxons within the context of Christendom. Alfred seems genuinely to have embraced the Vikings: for example, this treaty measures Danish life and Anglo-Saxon life equally, both at “eight half-marks of pure gold.”⁸¹ And third, the fact that Guthrum later minted coins in his new West Saxon baptismal name, Æthelstan, shows the force and permanence of his new Christian identity.

The same tension between heathendom and Christendom is attested in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* before the death of Alfred. Smyth writes, “The Chronicle sets Alfred’s role in the struggle against the Danes in the wider and more ancient context of the triumph of Christianity over paganism.”⁸² More precisely, it is the triumph of Christendom over Heathendom and its resident pagans. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, compiled in part, as a number of scholars have argued, under King Alfred’s direction, records Viking activity during his reign as that of “hæ en men” (“heathen men”).⁸³ For example, the entry for 835, dated as 832, reads, “Her hæ en men oferhergeadon Sceapige” (“In this year the heathen devastated Sheppey”). In 851, “Her Ceorl aldormon gefeaht wi hæ ene men min Defenascire æt Wicganbeorge” (“In this year ealdorman Ceorl with the men of Devon fought against the heathen at Wicganbeorge”). And in 865, “Her sæt hæ en here on Tenet” (“In this year a heathen host remained in Thanet”).⁸⁴ In a very obvious way, this characterizes the conflict especially as one between heathens and Christians, respectively the inhabitants of Heathendom and Christendom. This is consistent with Asser’s treatment of the Vikings as pagans in the Latin life. Also, in his will, Alfred characterized the conflict in the same way: “Ac hit gelamp þæt we ealle on hæ enum folce gebrocude wæron” (“But it came about that we all were oppressed by the heathen people”).⁸⁵ After Alfred’s reign, the *Chronicle* tends to record the belligerent activity between the inhabitants of East Anglia and the West

Saxon and Mercian kingdoms as being between Danes and Anglo-Saxons, as Christopher Brooke has noted.⁸⁶

The ethno-religious identity which is registered in the *World History*, especially the historical validation of a Germanic Christendom, seems to have been shared by a number of texts in the Age of Alfred. Whether this identity was common to all Anglo-Saxons during this period I cannot say, since the limit of my conclusion is set by the bounds of textual culture. Nevertheless, the Alfredian texts discussed above, especially the *World History*, seem to present a common ethnic identity as extending to all the Germanic inhabitants of Britain. The mythology of a common Germanic ancestor, Alaric, the most Christian king, adds to this a layer of religious identity. In the tripartite combination of ethnicity, religion, and kingship found in Christendom are found ideal models of historical behavior. And these models were intended to have an effect, as Bede put it in his *HE*. Moreover, some of the texts produced during Alfred's reign, especially the *World History*, strongly suggest that the effectiveness of kingly activity depends on the religious and ethnic logic of Christendom. This combined sense of Christian kingship and Germanic Christendom seems to have shaped the historical record of Alfred's leadership. In coming to understand local West Saxon history in light of Roman history and the history of Christendom, West Saxon texts reshaped the kernel of tradition established by Bede. This sense of ethnogenesis in the Age of Alfred will be reshaped again in the Age of Wulfstan. In the next chapter, I look to Archbishop Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* for a reconceived English identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Wulf among the Pagans

And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him.

—Deuteronomy 1:16

On St. Brice's Day, 13 November 1002, in part because of a mounting paranoia fueled by his increasingly tenuous hold on power, King Æthelred II the *Unræd* (or uncounselled, later called the Unready) ordered that every person of Danish ancestry in England be killed. The slaughter that day was so savage that it would remain in the common store of memory for generations. In one particularly brutal example, his men fired a church into which Anglo-Danish men, women, and children had fled for sanctuary, and watched as it burned with its ornaments and its books and its human fuel.¹ Almost a century later, stories of the man St. Dunstan had prophesied would become an *ignauus homo* ("wastrel") were still current, and contributed greatly to Æthelred's unenviable legacy as a slothful, cruel, disgraceful, and worthless monarch. William of Malmesbury, alive still in 1091 to the stories of St. Brice's Day, describes what "a pitiful sight it was when every man was compelled to betray his beloved guest-friends, whom he had made even more dear by close ties of relationship, and to disrupt those embraces with the sword."² Malmesbury indicates that social ties of relationship, ties of marriage and blood, had, to the minds of some, long bound Anglo-Saxons to Anglo-Danes as a family, thus doubly indicting Æthelred as a king who savagely befouled both blood and community, kin and kingdom. But in the opening decades of the eleventh century, the binding of Dane and Englishman was not so clear.³

To twentieth-century readers, it may seem strange that Æthelred distinguished between Danes and Anglo-Saxons on racial grounds. But Æthelred maintained that Danes, whom he said were emerging in England "like cockles among wheat" (*velut lolium inter triticum*), were "unlike our race" (*degentibus*).⁴ With this image culled from both the common agricultural life of his kingdom and the registers of family (*gens*), Æthelred implies that the extirpation of Anglo-Danes in this ancient

act of ethnic cleansing was just.⁵ As Jonathan Wilcox points out, the reference here to Matthew 13:24–30 implies that the Danes, as Matthew says of the cockle, “are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them, is the devil.”⁶ It is important to remember that it had been but two generations since AngloSaxons gained limited control over the Danelaw, the Anglo-Danish portion of Britain. So, it is not obvious that racial tensions were implausible. In his racially charged fury, Æthelred managed to cause the murder of Gunnhild, sister of Swein, king of Denmark. This murder (and in all likelihood the massacre itself) seems to have contributed in no small part to the invasion of Britain by Swein and his Danish troops in 1003.⁷ But within a decade, AngloSaxons who were not of Danish descent were divided over the issue of a rightful successor to the English throne, irrespective of his ethnicity; and by 1016, many of the more powerful thanes had sided with King Cnut of Denmark, yielding their allegiance, and ultimately their lands, to Danish imperial control. By 1066, the invading Normans called both the native Anglo-Danes and Anglo-Saxons English, and the invaded largely imagined themselves comprehended as single people by the foreign, Norse Normans.⁸

In a previous chapter, I hypothesized a role for Christendom in negotiating the textual communion of Anglian and Saxon identities within the context of Germanic Christianity. This negotiation, I argued, was registered in part in the ninth-century emendations to the Alfredian *Orosius*. In this chapter, I examine Archbishop Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, composed in the second decade of the eleventh century, and later revised over the course of a number of years. My contention is that in the *Sermo* we can observe how Wulfstan appeals to Old Testament logic in a reconfiguration of the textual kernel of English identity. Old Testament logic, explicit in Gildas and Bede, and described by both Patrick Wormald and Nicholas Howe, regards foreign invasion as the result of national sin. My contention in this chapter is that within a context of Old Testament logic, the *Sermo* registers an identity based primarily on legal and moral foundations, rather than ethnic ones. The English people who are displaced in Wulfstan’s notion of Old Testament logic are not defined as an ethnic community as they had been by Bede and Alfred, but as a legal community in so far as the law expresses a moral code.⁹ Viking incursions of the ninth century had resulted in a compromise primarily with Anglo-Saxons which respected ethnic autonomy, establishing the Danes within a distinct ethnic enclave. But by the time the wave of Scandinavian incursions witnessed by Wulfstan resulted in the accession of a Dane, Cnut, to the throne of England, Danes had been settled in England, had been speaking English, and had been part of the English polity for a number of generations. The Danish enclave, or Danelaw, was ultimately subject to the English king and church.

What I believe Wulfstan’s work demonstrates in part is that Old Testament logic was seen to fulfill itself in the submission of the English people to a foreign king. This foreignness was not ethnic. Wulfstan seems to have been witnessing events within a pattern of Old Testament history which did not rest exclusively on the

election of a single, ethnic *gens*. I argue that he saw the Viking invasions as the fruit of Anglo-Danish sin. The importance of this point lies in its tacit assumption that the Anglo-Danish community is to Wulfstan so integrated that the sins of a settled Dane and the sins of an Englishman are equally responsible for the punitive disposition of divine justice over the whole of the English people. To Wulfstan, the Anglo-Danes and the Anglo-Saxons are a single English people before God, notwithstanding their respective ethnic origins. This marks a fundamental break with the racial exclusivity of earlier ages in imagining a single people.

OLD TESTAMENT LOGIC

It may seem an unjust contention that if your neighbor steals, you will be punished for it. But, if your neighbor is of the same *þeod* as you, then this appears to be precisely the case Wulfstan is making. He defines the limits of a community afflicted by sin by answering the questions, Who will suffer for an individual's sin and why? In doing so, he appeals to a shared moral code which is the product of Christian doctrine, and to the evidence in history of God's retribution for sin. Wormald terms this retribution "Old Testament logic":

Old Testament logic was that the cause of political disaster was sin and crime. To obey God's law was a *sine qua non* of lasting worldly success. Anglo-Saxon experience, whether Northumbrian, Mercian, Kentishman or West Saxon, was that Bede's implied warning had almost come to pass when another pagan people [Vikings] crossed the North Sea and threatened to remove their own hard-won promised land as the punishment of their backsliding. Any further lapse could well mean that the English would finally suffer what they had themselves inflicted on the Britons. Obedience to the new English government was the price of survival.¹⁰

This trope is common to Scripture and to a Christian understanding of history.¹¹ Simon Keynes writes that the Viking invasions of the 990s "would certainly have been regarded by many as an expression of divine displeasure with the English people."¹² Howe points out that it was as a moral lesson, for example, that the earlier Viking sack of Lindisfarne had meaning. Howe explains that to Alcuin, "The Vikings were not simply pirates who looted this monastery; they were agents of God who, by executing his judgment, called the status of the English as a chosen people into doubt."¹³ In other words, although the Vikings did in actual fact loot Lindisfarne, the looting also had a moral significance. This significance was understood in terms of historical patterns evident in the Old Testament which formed the foundations of early medieval historical thought.

Old Testament logic is evident in the entirety of the Old Testament, the story of Yahweh and His people. In Numbers 14:11, Yahweh says, "How long will this

people insult me? How long will they refuse to believe in me despite the signs I have worked among them? I will strike them with pestilence and disown them.” The Israelites learn through the subsequent suffering inflicted upon them that each shall “bear the burden of your sins” (Num 14:34), whenever a sufficient number of them offends God. Because of the disbelief of a portion of the people, the Israelites, God’s Chosen, suffer God’s wrath. N.J.Higham has pointed out that this historiographical logic is manifested in Christian writing as early as Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*.¹⁴ Eusebius, who wrote at the turn of the fourth century, had attributed Constantine’s victory over his enemies to his adoption of Christianity, an association summed up in Constantine’s famous declaration before the miraculous apparition of a shining cross, *In hoc signo vinces* (“in this sign we conquer”). The people is given victory through its belief in God, as both Constantine and Numbers attest. At the end of the fifth century, Salvian invoked Old Testament logic to explain why barbarians had overwhelmed southern Gaul during his lifetime. Like Salvian’s *De Gubernatione Dei*, Gildas wrote the *De Excidio Britanniae* in the mid-sixth century as an attempt to relieve the oppression brought on by national sin, also explaining to “the leaders of British society that their immorality and disobedience to God were responsible for the unfavorable relationship then existing between the Britons and Saxons.”¹⁵ Higham writes that Gildas’ history

was, first and foremost, the means of persuading contemporaries that there was an inescapable causal relationship between their own morality (essentially their obedience to God’s laws), the attitude of God towards them and their success in withstanding or evicting their enemies.¹⁶

Gildas’ reasoning is echoed by Bede over a hundred and fifty years later.

Old Testament logic is plain in Bede’s description of the *adventus Saxonum*. When the Picts and English Irish slow their plundering of the British parts of the island, Bede writes that suddenly there was “so great an abundance of corn on the island as had never before been known.”¹⁷ The affluence which resulted brought *luxuria*, lechery, to the Britons, which in turn brought sins of the worst sort—cruelty, dishonesty, drunkenness, envy, and so forth. This general state of sinfulness incurred a plague of such intensity, Bede says, “that there were not enough people left alive to bury the dead” Even through this divine sign of retribution for sin, the Britons “could not be awakened from the spiritual death which their sins had brought upon them.” Consequently, “a still more terrible retribution soon afterwards overtook this sinful people for their fearful crimes.” Then, the Britons call the Saxons from across the sea. Bede writes, “As events plainly showed, this was ordained by the will of God so that evil might fall upon those miscreants,” meaning the Britons. The pagan Saxons arrive and overwhelm the Britons, having made a treaty with the belligerent Picts. And, in a plain

statement of the force of Old Testament logic, Bede writes, “To put it briefly, the fire kindled by the hands of the heathen [paganorum] executed the’ just vengeance of God on the nation [populi] for its crimes. It was not unlike that fire once kindled by the Chaldeans which consumed the walls and all the buildings of Jerusalem.”¹⁸

In a discussion of the genre of *The Battle of Maldon*, Paul Szarmach points to possible evidence of the same logic in the Old High German poem, *Das Ludwigslied*, written to celebrate “the victory of Louis III of France over the Danes on 3 August 881 at Saucourt-en-Vimeu.”¹⁹ Calling the logic a “standard Christian moral position,” he describes it as an explanation “that the heathen have come as punishment for the sins of the Franks,” that “Christ is angry with the sinning people, who are the ultimate cause for the confusion in the kingdom.”²⁰ The Old English Orosius had invoked the same logic to describe, for example, the fall of Tiberius: “Hu God þa þa mæstan ofermetto gewræc on þæm folce, ⁊ hu swi e hi his anguldon from heora agnum casere” (“How God then avenged that very great pride upon the people, and how dearly they bought it from their own emperor!” VI.2.²¹ Ælfric reminds us in a Rogation week sermon of Sidonius Apollinaris instituting a period of penance to alleviate a siege by the Visigoths in the late fifth century. Ælfric describes how Mamertus, bishop of Vienne in Burgundy at the same time, similarly ordered the people to fast for three days in order to quell an earthquake and fires set by lightning. Ælfric then says, “Hi namon da bysne þæs fæstenes æt þam niniueiscan folce: þæt folc wæs swi e synfull. þa wolde god hi fordon. ac hi gegladedon hine mid heora behreowsungæ” (“They took the example of the fast from the people of Nineveh. The people were very sinful; then God intended to destroy them, but they placated him with their repentance”).²² In the social and political world of Anglo-Saxon England, sin in sufficient amount brought on divine wrath. Only communal repentance could alleviate it.

Howe addresses the persistence of this logic from Gildas to *Beowulf*. Gildas, he says, “recorded the history of the British because it stood as the record of God’s judgment on their sins.”²³ Wulfstan seems to have known Gildas only through a letter written by Alcuin to Archbishop Ethelhard after the Viking devastation of Lindisfarne in 793. In this letter, Alcuin wrote,

We read in the book of Gildas, most learned of the Britons, that the Britons themselves lost their fatherland because of the greedy pillaging [rapinas et avaritiam] of their leaders, the injustice of their judges, the slackness in preaching of their bishops and the luxury [luxuria, cf. Bede] and wicked ways of the people [populi]. We must be on our guard that these same vices do not become established in our own time, that the divine blessing may keep our country in the prosperity which it has in mercy given us.²⁴

Alcuin had expressed the same sentiments in his poem on the bishops, kings, and saints of York, *De Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, “In His goodness/God determined that the wicked race/should lose its father’s kingdoms for its wrongdoings....” Instead, this chosen Germanic people, “God’s destined race,” as Alcuin puts it, is destined to take control of the island.²⁵ Wulfstan built upon this vision to warn the English that if they did not perform up to standard, they, too, would lose control of the island. His *Sermo Lupi*, in which he cites Gildas explicitly (“An þeodwita wæs on Brytta tidum Gildas hatte,” “There was a historian in the time of the Britons called Gildas), testifies to the force of Old Testament logic in his understanding of the providential history of the English people.²⁶ But the English of Alcuin were not the English of Wulfstan, and parts of the island were now under Danish law. Much of the east of Britain, although loyal to the English king, was known as the Danelaw. As Mercia was under its own law, and much of England under English law, provisions were made at the turn of the millennium for the distinct society which had evolved in eastern Britain from Danish origins.

THE DANELAW AND THE VIKINGS

The Danish component to English identity at the time of Wulfstan is largely uncontested, although not necessarily exclusive of various significant regional identities. Sir Geoffrey Elton writes, “Although the inhabitants of the eastern and north-eastern sectors—the so-called Danelaw—remained distinguishably Danish for quite a while and left permanent linguistic traces in landscape and government terminology, this did not prevent the full flowering of an English kingdom indifferent to the king’s origins: Danish Cnut was as fully king of England as was English Æthelstan.”²⁷ In this vein, it is important to note that the Danelaw was under the rule of English, or rather Saxon kings for a great number of years. Christopher Brooke, writing of the aftermath of the civil war which brought Cnut to the throne, concurs: “The events of the civil war had shown that there was no simple division of loyalty between English and Danes, and that a number of leading thegns and jarls were prepared to support a monarch from either side, if he proved more competent than [A]Ethelred, and capable of holding the allegiance of his subjects.”²⁸ Sarah Foot reported recently that “it does appear that one collective identity of Englishness had an enduring currency through the pre-Conquest period, transcending the significant separation brought about by the existence of a multiplicity of different political organizations and ethnic groups among the Anglo-Saxons.”²⁹

At first sight, this may appear difficult to reconcile with aspersions cast upon Vikings in Wulfstan’s *Sermo*. But Wulfstan raises an important question about differences between settled Danes and incoming Vikings. He writes, “þeh þræla wylc hlaforde æthleape ⁊ of Cristendom to wicinge weorþe...” (“Although it

happens that a slave escape from a lord and, leaving Christendom becomes a Viking...,"l. 80). If the slave is English, then it is plausible that he might leave Christendom to become a Viking, but one wonders whether an English slave might leave Christendom to become a Dane. Wulfstan probably means that an Englishman can *weorpan*, become or be made into, a Viking rather than an Englishman can become a Dane. To be precise, Wulfstan's lexicon suggests that it is not an Englishman who becomes a Viking, but a slave, *præla*; the transformation in this sentence is not ethnic but social—slaves become Vikings, Englishmen do not become Danes. If the slave were Danish or Norwegian, then the transformation would also be one of status. In fact, the mention of Christendom, the order of religion and law which undergirds the mutual respect for the legal status of English and Danish slaves, suggests that this latter is the case.³⁰ Since they are in grammatical parallel, it looks as if *præla* and *wicing* may both be terms of status, rather than terms of ethnicity. This possible distinction between a Viking and a Dane may relate to a legal and social tension current at the time, what John le Patourel notes as the "tension between the incoming Norse and the Danes who had been settled around York for over a genera tion."³¹ The tension seems to be not so much ethnic as resulting from the Vikings flouting the basic principles of English community—be they social, political, religious, or sexual. As the example of the slave indicates, Wulfstan's concern is the subversion of legal and moral hierarchy implicit in both the viking attacks and English sin. One major difference between Vikings and Anglo-Danes is that Vikings transgress the natural order, turn it upsidedown, while the Anglo-Danes are expected to uphold it.³²

Moreover, there appears to be a lexical distinction between Danes and Vikings. Gwyn Jones explains that in some of the written sources, *Dene* often conflated Viking and Dane, as did the term *Nor menn*.³³ While it is the case that Scandinavian vikings might be called Danes, neither does Jones argue nor do the sources demonstrate that settled Danes were ever called Vikings. According to P.H.Sawyer, "[T]o contemporaries the word 'Viking' meant a pirate but...not all the Scandinavians who came to England were pirates. Some were traders and others settlers in search of land."³⁴ The Old English word, *wicing*, more often than not simply means pirate. For example, the Alfredian *World History* relates that in the time of the consul Metellus, "þa wicingas on þæt land hergedon" ("the pirates laid waste to that land"). This does not refer to Scandinavians. The Latin word translated here is *piraticam*, from the masculine *pirata*, which Cicero and Lucan both use to mean pirate.³⁵ The *World History* also records that Philip of Macedon became a *wicing*.³⁶ Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, is called a *wicing*, but he was not a Dane. In both these cases, the term is not an ethnic designation.

As another example, MS Cotton Cleopatra AIII, a Latin-Old English glossary, glosses, "*Piratici* wicingsceapan, sæsceapan, æsomen" ("*piratici* pirate-warrior, sea-thief, spearman").³⁷ Again, no ethnicity is evident. In the Old English *Exodus*, the term appears at line 333a in the compound *sæwicing* to describe the Israelite

tribe of Reuben: “Randas bæron/sæwicingas ofer sealtne mersc./manna menio” (“The sons of Reuben carried themselves, sea-dwellers over salt marshes, a multitude of men”). Again, the Israelites are not Scandinavian. Howe notes,

Although *wicing* can mean ‘pirate,’ the word has no etymological force of ‘plunder’ or ‘robbery’ in OE. That sense for *wicing* is an extrapolation from the literal meaning of *wic* as a ‘temporary camp or habitation’ [BosworthToller]. That is, *wicingas* are so named because in their search for ships to raid and settlements to plunder, they occupy temporary camps. Construed within the context of this poem, *sæwicingas* designates those who temporarily occupy the sea [bed].³⁸

In this vein, Maximus of Turin notes, “*piraterium enim habitaculum piratarum est*” (“a *piraterium* is the dwelling place of pirates”). Perhaps there is an echo in the Book of Job 7:1 which relates that the life of man is as transitory as that of a pirate.³⁹ Or perhaps the etymological sense Howe isolates in the Old English is ultimately a reflex of the significance of *pirata* in the Latin. In any event, all this goes to show that while Vikings from Scandinavia were sometimes termed Danes, not all Danes were Vikings. Furthermore, although the point is under dispute, it seems that a wave of Danish settlers followed upon an initial force of Vikings in the ninth century.⁴⁰ This second wave, then, was comprised of settlers, not necessarily of pirates. Furthermore, Norwegians numbered among the incoming, and while they might sometimes be termed Vikings, they were not all Danes.

The primary distinction to be drawn here is between settled, Christian Danes and incoming, heathen Vikings. Although both may sometimes be seen as ethnically Danish, the former are part of the larger Christian kingdom of England (notwithstanding a clear legal and ethnic distinction), while the latter are heathen interlopers invading from Scandinavia. In the former regard, Henry Loyn points out that under Edgar (959–75 A.D.), “Full recognition was given to the legal customs of the Danelaw, but the Danish population settled in England were Christian and acknowledged the Christian king, Edgar, as their overlord.”⁴¹ Perhaps for this reason, Wulfstan emphasizes the community of Christendom, rather than Danish ethnicity, in his complaint in the *Sermo*: “of *Cristendom* to wicinge weorpe” (slaves leave “*Christendom* to become pirates,” my italics). In this complaint, Wulfstan may indicate that not all Vikings were Scandinavian: in fact, some may have been English slaves. But understood in this complaint is the fact that the community of English Danes and English Anglo-Saxons shared a common devotion to Christendom, and ultimately both were subject to one king and his law. A Viking is one who is not subject to the law, one who subverts it. On one hand, paganism is incidental to this subversion of law (*dom*), on the other hand paganism defines this subversion of law. As with Edgar and the Danelaw, the Wantage Code, as Cyril Hart points out, a code drawn up by King Æthelred

to govern the Danish Five Boroughs, “impresses the stamp of a central royal authority on local customs and administration of Danish origin.”⁴² While cultural distinctions obtained in Anglo-Saxon England between ethnic Danes and ethnic Anglo-Saxons, the distinction between the Christian English, both Danish and Anglo-Saxon, and the heathen Vikings rested on the tension between order and subversion. As Robert Kellog points out, “Despite the raids of the Danes, the attitudes of church leaders towards pagans...were not uniformly negative. In the eighth century,... Boniface and others...praised the virtue and civic order of the pagans....”⁴³ Wulfstan, too, will note pagan virtue; one imagines that York was not free of pagans seeking a settled life and, perhaps, Wulfstan’s faith. In 1002, as Wilcox notes, “The faith of the Danes...is a open question.”⁴⁴

Wulfstan was not unfamiliar with the ethnic diversity of settled, Christian England, and himself may have been from the Danelaw. Eric John writes, “Wulfstan was clearly of distinguished family, probably of East Anglian origin.”⁴⁵ And East Anglia, as Sir Frank Stenton reminds us, was part of the Danelaw.⁴⁶ Wulfstan was archbishop of York, center of the Scandinavian kingdom of Northumbria. Dorothy Betherum notes, “York was by that time a Danish city.”⁴⁷ Wulfstan, likely from the Danelaw and archbishop of a Danish city, was familiar with Anglo-Danish custom. Consequently, his sermon would not have been preached to a congregation free of Danes or in an atmosphere ignorant of a distinction between settled, Christian Danes and incoming, heathen Vikings. But imagination need not suffice to show English Danes and Anglo-Saxons in mutual opposition to Vikings: the early eleventh-century poem *The Battle of Maldon*, written within ten years of Wulfstan’s *Sermo*, describes men with Danish names fighting for Ealdorman Byrhtnoth against invading Vikings. In this poem, a troop of Vikings arrives outside the town of Maldon in Essex in late summer, 991, and threatens the local population with devastation. Ealdorman Byrhtnoth, the local lord, musters troops to fight the Vikings, troops which include local English Danes.

And yet, pagan Vikings had already settled in England while more continued to arrive. In 1016, their king, Cnut, took the throne left him by his father Swein, who died in 1014. For Wulfstan, who became lawmaker to Cnut, these pagan Vikings needed to accept Christianity in order to ensure the health of the larger community; and he clearly sought the uniform application of God’s law upon all the inhabitants of England. It was as God had explained to Moses in Numbers 15: 11–12, “There shall be only one law for you and for the settler among you. This is a law that shall bind your descendants always; before Yahweh, you and the settler alike.” This must have been a difficult prescription for a Christian archbishop and lawmaker to implement since, as Betherum describes it, one of the major difficulties Wulfstan and the English Witan (the body of counselors) faced was the imperfect assimilation of pagans into a nation whose institutions were built upon Christian political theory and Christian virtues. The Christian state may have been forced to concede unwillingly that some subjects of the king

recognized the Church's moral authority, and some did not. And any segment of the population that did not respect the moral guidance of the Church in secular affairs would be unlikely to identify with a state whose apparatus was infused with ecclesiastics, and whose laws were built upon the moral foundations of Christian doctrine.⁴⁸ This foundation is clear in Cnut's own laws: He begins his code of 1020 A.D. by promising his clergy and nobles, perhaps in memory of Æthelred's perfidy, "– ic cy e eow, þæt ic wylle beon hold hlaforð – unswicende to Godes gerihtum – to rihtre woroldlage" ("And I say to you that I will be a faithful lord and undeceitful with respect to God's laws and to man's laws").⁴⁹ Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity*, issued under Cnut, says of the English king, "Cristenum cyninge gebyre on cristenre þeode, þæt he sy, ealswa hit riht is, folces frofer and rihtwis hyrde ofer cristene heorde" ("It is befitting that a Christian king rule over a Christian people, that he should do so, just as is right, for the benefit of the people, and rightly to keep custody over a Christian flock").⁵⁰ Again, the role of the English king is defined in light of Christianity. It is Christendom's common subjection to the law and judgment of God, His *dom*, that sets a common ground for moral behavior, and therefore the common ground for the community's health. Members of the Anglo-Saxon-Danish Christian community are bound by God's law and by English law. It is this fundamental fact that sparks the fire of Wulfstan's *Sermo*.

THE SERMON OF THE WOLF

Wulfstan had a long and distinguished career as scholar, lawmaker, canonist, and archbishop. He was bishop of London from 966 until 1022, when he was elevated to the archepiscopate of York, in which office he served until his death in 1023. He served King Æthelstan until the civil war of 1014–1016, and, upon the death of Æthelstan and the accession of the Dane, Cnut, to the throne of England in 1016, served as the new king's lawmaker and archbishop. The *Sermo* is typical of Wulfstan's sermons in that it is "mainly directed to a call to repentance on the part of a sinning people."⁵¹ Unlike his contemporary Ælfric, few of Wulfstan's sermons are exegetical, and few are proper to the Church year. Wulfstan delivered the *Sermo* to his *þeod*, or people, to whom he refers with the first person plural, *we*. With the pronoun *we*, Wulfstan not only announces his audience as a discrete and identifiable community, but also, through the invocation of Old Testament logic, intimates a fundamental relationship between the various individuals of this community. This relationship is more than coincidental, since Wulfstan relates the communal health of his audience to the moral activity of the individuals who comprise it. Wulfstan's episcopal efforts seem to a large extent to have been directed at ensuring the health of the larger community through textual interdiction. Three aspects of Wulfstan's thought as it relates to the *Sermo* ought to be mentioned here. First, Wulfstan was convinced of the fundamental and causal

link between the moral activity of the individual and the general health of the community to which that individual belonged. Second, the dependence of the community on the moral activity of the individual required compilations of laws and sermons directed exclusively at curbing the excesses of individual activity. And third, the ethnicity of the individual was coincidental to the body of legal controls under which he or she contributed to the health of the English nation. This overwhelming sense of legal obligation shapes the way in which Wulfstan treats ethnic distinction.

The *Sermo* has proven the most popular of Wulfstan's sermons inasmuch as there are more editions of it than any of his other approximately twentyfive sermons. The first edition was made by Matthew Parker in 1572, followed one hundred and thirty-three years later by editions by Elizabeth Elstob and George Hickes. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw numerous editions, especially in Anglo-Saxon readers such as Henry Sweet's. The major editions, though, are by Dorothy Whitelock in 1939 and Dorothy Betherum in 1957.⁵² Five manuscripts of the *Sermo* are extant, and they present three distinct versions. The major difference between these two major editions is that Betherum presents three versions of the *Sermo*, while Whitelock presents a single version based on British Museum, Cotton Nero, A i, ff. 110–15, noting variations in footnotes. Throughout the century, there has been a great deal of debate on the order of composition of the three versions, the shortest initially being thought the first, as Betherum argued. Whitelock presented the longest version in her edition, arguing that since it appears to have been written in Wulfstan's own hand, it must have had Wulfstan's approval. Current opinion is that the longer version may indeed be closer to the original. Stanley Greenfield and Daniel J. Calder note that "the shorter versions lack the references to the Danish attacks, since these would no longer be relevant after Cnut's accession to the throne."⁵³ (I tend towards the same conclusion, but for different reasons.) Virtually all critical work on the *Sermo* concerns its theme or the dating of its versions.

With respect to the theme, the *Sermo* is often considered as treating of the coming of the antichrist, although this general opinion is not universally held, and its theological assumptions are questionable. Greenfield and Calder take their view of Wulfstan's theme from Stephanie Hollis when they report, "No longer does he view the tribulation of the last days as simply a punishment for sin, but instead he sees the retributive process dynamically."⁵⁴ This dynamism is explained by Hollis who notes that the sermon is concerned exclusively with "the nation's progression to disaster." As sin increases in quantity, she argues, the reign of the antichrist nears. Wulfstan's underlying claim according to Hollis is that the accumulation of sin is what brings on the antichrist: "Antichrist's reign is presented not as the ultimate horror foreshadowed by manifold tribulations but as the climax of a progressive growth of afflictions which is proportionate to the increasing quantity of sin."⁵⁵ Hollis cites Peter Clemons as another who holds this view of Wulfstan's

incremental eschatology; Clemoes suggests that Wulfstan's grammatical constructions sometimes "point up the direct connection between human behaviour and the approaching end of the world."⁵⁶ In simple terms, if too many (English) people sin, the world will end.

This view ignores the very important eschatological evidence in Genesis 8:21. There, God makes two important promises: "Never again will I curse the earth because of man, because his heart contrives evil from his infancy. Never again will I strike down every living thing as I have done."⁵⁷ God promises that he will not destroy the world on account of sin. This promise is echoed in the formulaic ending of many of Wulfstan's sermons: world without end, Amen. Neither is there any convincing evidence for the prevalence in England of this view of the end of time. In fact, popular (or vulgar) eschatological opinion in the early middle ages was based almost exclusively on a computational view of the end days which conceived of the sixth age as lasting only a certain length of time—not being prompted by a quantity of sin. Bede's introduction of dating from the birth of Christ in order to escape the chiliasm of the eighth century testifies to the weight of this view.⁵⁸ Augustine, Bede, and Isidore of Seville all agreed that the "end of the Sixth Age is known to God alone," even though a number of medieval scholars thought to calculate the duration of the sixth age as one thousand years.⁵⁹ In his work on the six ages, Bede continually repeated the orthodox contention that the sixth age came to a close in "a seventh of everlasting rest in another life," not in an apocalyptic earthly deluge. Bede rejects the millennial view as "heretical and frivolous."⁶⁰ So says Bede, so say others. In fact, Hollis is in difficult theological territory with her contention that Wulfstan alone among Anglo-Saxon Christian bishops considered the end of time resulting from within an antediluvian paradigm.⁶¹ Furthermore, as Joseph Trahern, Milton McCormick Gatch, and Bernard McGinn have all noted, the notion of millennial panic in Anglo-Saxon England is not borne out by the evidence. Only the Blickling homilist (who, incidentally, did not think the antichrist had come) seems to believe in the imminent doom; Ælfric and Wulfstan merely note the trope that the world worsens in sin as it ages, and that one day soon time will end.⁶² But this is not cast causally. In his *De temporibus antichristi*, Wulfstan says also, "þu is eos woruld fram dæge to dæge wyrse ÷ wyrse" ("So is this world from day to day worse and worse").⁶³ In this sermon on the time of the antichrist, Wulfstan does not make the case that sin brings on the antichrist. Wulfstan says that God brings on the antichrist in order to persecute *good* men that they might be cleansed before coming to God.⁶⁴

Far more likely is Wulfstan's invocation in the *Sermo* of Old Testament logic, that is, of the displacement of the English people by a heathen invader sent as scourge, perhaps as a small taste of apocalyptic justice. Betherum describes the sermon as exhibiting "Wulfstan's profound concern with political and spiritual ills in the nation and his impassioned plea for reformation lest God's anger destroy the English, as it had the British centuries before."⁶⁵ In other words, Wulfstan

seems more concerned with the imminent enactment of Old Testament logic on the English than he does with the last days of the world. He “deals almost exclusively with concrete abuses of the day.”⁶⁶ Hollis, too, sees this aspect of the *Sermo*, but she sees it subsumed within the larger eschatological theme. Importantly, Hollis notes the perversion of the social order and the consequent degradation of the English people. Greenfield and Calder remark on the relation of the *Sermo* to Gildas, in that both seem to promise displacement by a hostile pagan force if national sin is not curtailed—Hollis, though, contends that the state of the English is unprecedented in this regard, therefore their punishment must be “a fate far worse than national extermination.”⁶⁷ The survival of the English depends upon their reform. On this point, all commentators are agreed. My contention here is that reform depends in turn on an understanding of a twofold moral code.

Wulfstan in his laws and in his *Sermo* articulates a two-fold moral code by which the English must abide if they are to survive. The survival of the English community means precisely inducing its Anglo-Saxon and Danish members to turn from both sin and illegality, since the two are not always coincident. Examining the language with which Wulfstan makes this argument allows us to theorize identity in the *Sermo*, especially with respect to the vision of the good which the community is urged to attain. One of the first aspects Wulfstan introduces is the binding force of divine and English law on individuals. The dual nature of transgression—against God’s law and against man’s law—is exemplified at the outset of the *Sermo*: “ac dægh-wamlice man ihte yfel æfter oþrum, ⁊ unriht rærde ⁊ unlaga manege ealles to wide gynd ealle þas þeode” (“but daily men added one evil to another, and committed sin and many unlawful acts too widely among all this people,” ll. 15–17).⁶⁸ Here, the terms *unriht* and *unlaga* describe the bifurcated parameters of transgression, the former a privation of divine law, the latter a privation of common law. What may seem at first like a typical stylistic flourish in fact ought to be regarded as thematically relevant. Again, in the laws of Æthelred, Wulfstan writes, “Forþam þurh þæt hit sceal earde godian to ahte, þe man unriht alegec ⁊ rihtwisnesse lufige for Gode ⁊ for worlde” (“It is only on this account that the condition of the country will be restored: that men abandon sin and love righteousness on behalf of God and on behalf of the world”).⁶⁹ In introducing the dual scope of the law, God and the world, Wulfstan suggests that the Englishman who is capable of restoring health to the community is not only subject to both spheres of the law, but also acts in accordance with them.

In the *Sermo*, Wulfstan makes the causal relation between moral transgression (against the laws of God and man) and public health explicit:

And we eac forþam habbaþ fela byrsta ⁊ bysmara gebiden, ⁊ gif we ænige bote gebidan scylan þonne mote we þæs to Gode ernian bet þonne we ær þysan dydan. Forþam mid miclan earnungan we geearnedan þa yrmþa þe

us on sittap ⁊ mid swyþe micelan earnungan we þa bote motan æt Gode geræcan, gif hit sceal heonanforþ godiende weorþan. La hwæt we witan ful georne þæt to miclan bryce sceal micel bot nyde, ⁊ to miclan bryne wæter unlytel, gif man þæt fyr sceal to ahte acwencan.

(And we have also therefore endured many injuries and insults, and if we shall experience any remedy then we must deserve better of God than we have previously done. For with great deserts we have earned the misery that is upon us, and with truly great merit we must earn the remedy from God, if henceforth things are to become improved. Lo, we know full well that a great breach of law shall necessitate a great recompense, and a great fire no little water, if one is to quench that fire at all.) (ll. 17–25)

The emphasis in this passage is on the causal, as Hollis points out, but there is also an undiscussed comparison. Wulfstan compares the degree of remedy necessary to obtain God's renewed grace to the degree of remedy necessary to obtain satisfaction in legal proceedings. In fact, the same term is used in both cases: *ernian*. *Earnian* means "to earn, merit or win." The comparison is between recompense in secular and divine law: just as a great breach of secular law merits a great remedy, so does a breach of divine law. One point to be made here is that Wulfstan's comparison depends on his audience having some knowledge of secular law, and we can be fairly sure they knew the laws. Otherwise, his comparison would not clarify the point. A second point to be made is that just as legal remedy satisfies an offended party, so will moral remedy satisfy God. Here the beneficial aspect of satisfaction is emphasized. With the phrase "gif hit sceal heonanforþ godiende weorþan" ("if henceforth things are to become improved"), Wulfstan seems to envision a comparatively better, but not necessarily a superlative, scenario. Wulfstan anticipates a coming satisfaction, rather than a reward, a people returned to their service of God, rather than a people brought to victory over invaders. Wulfstan does not envision the ouster of the Danes, only a return to order. Here is Old Testament logic applied directly to the satisfaction of moral debt.

And a third point to be made concerns Wulfstan's third comparison, that between water and fire.⁷⁰ Possibly this comparison is made for the sake of the conceptual and aural consonance between *bryce* and *bryne*, breach and fire, but it also may serve to enlighten those in his audience unprepared to understand his legal comparison. Betherum notes that oftentimes, Wulfstan was "preaching to a not very subtle audience whose capacities for abstruse thought he did not overestimate."⁷¹ This is beautifully put, and to the contemporary reader, perhaps a touch remedial. Wulfstan's comparison casts Old Testament logic, which Wulfstan employs here, in a realistic and pragmatic light: just as water is the surest remedy for fire, so is allegiance to God's law the surest remedy for invasion. To

those to whom the logic of the situation was explained, but who did not believe its accuracy or applicability—as above, “þeh man swa ne wene” (“although one may not believe it”)—this comparison to fire and water calls upon a storehouse of shared experience, especially the observed laws of nature, rather than exclusively upon a knowledge of law or of Scripture. If rhetorical gestures in this passage were meant to grab the attention of his audience (and there is no reason to assume that Wulfstan wanted to bore his audience), then they suggest that Wulfstan’s audience is not only receptive to the poetic in his sermon, but that they appreciate such an appeal to common knowledge. Moreover, the invocation of natural law implies an analogy between the rule-governed behavior of nature and what ought to be the rule-governed behavior of men. The comparison also suggests that members of his audience were familiar with law codes, at least insofar as they understood a notion of justice had from legal satisfaction, and enough so that a comparison between divine and secular law had some meaning. Common to both settled Danes and Anglo-Saxons was such a notion of justice had from legal satisfaction.

Wulfstan, in his laws and his *Sermo*, is generally concerned to improve the plight of the English. In the *Sermo*, his appeal is not to a king or to a public service or to a clergy, but directly to English individuals. In this he implies that individuals have a role to play in the health of the nation. He seems to expect some understanding of individual, lay responsibility—beyond Christian responsibility. By an extension of Old Testament logic to the more secular realm of law, if the health of the community depends on the behavior of its members, then it must be the responsibility of the community to police its own recalcitrant members. There is an inherently causal relation between the acts of an individual and the prosperity of the group, whether that individual be indigenous or a stranger (as Numbers declares). And by virtue of this logical chain comes the inescapable conclusion that the group is an extension of the individual: the sins of individual Englishmen, for example, do not bring devastation to the Franks. In other words, there is understood to exist some intrinsic and essential connection between people of the same *peod* that allows the sins of one individual to affect the welfare of another. Wulfstan says, “¬ hrædest is to cweþenne Godes laga lape ¬ lara forsawenne. And þæs we habbaþ ealle þurh Godes yrrre bysmor gelome, gecnawe se þe cunne.¬ se byrst wyrþ gemæne þeh man swa ne wene eallre bysse þeode butan God george” (“And, in short, the laws of God are loathed and his teaching despised; and therefore we all are frequently disgraced through God’s anger, let him know it who is able. And the injury will become owned in common, although one may not believe it, by all this people, unless God protects us,” ll. 48–52). The *byrst*, injury or calamity, brought on by some men will become common property to the whole *peod*, to us *ealle*, to all the people, even though the fact may not be believed. All own the punishment which an individual’s sin incurs.

This implied natural relation between individual members of a group is an intriguing proposition if we recognize that the English were a racially diverse community; Richard Humble has called England after the age of Edgar the home of “multi-national inhabitants.”⁷² Even though some of its members were Danes, some were Angles, and some were Saxons, Wulfstan seems to have thought that they were all intrinsically connected through the divine instantiation of Old Testament logic, even as it was rendered in royal law. It is only through this logic that Wulfstan’s warning makes sense: if the immorality of some will produce general despair for all, then the fate of one Englishman depends on the morality of another, be he Angle, Saxon, or Dane. The binding force of this ethnically diverse community is a common subjection to the law of God and man. This logic takes no account of ethnic differentiation among Englishmen: it makes a single body out of three ethnicities. Its immorality is measured against Christian virtue and law, its illegality against public law. To the Wulfstan of Cnut’s laws, the English people are defined not by ethnicity, but by their mutual subjection to the combined body of divine and secular law. It is the importance of the law in the face of invasion and displacement that fires the cauldron of Wulfstan’s invective. He is not so much concerned that a foreign people are arriving, but that the rule of moral and secular law is weakening. Given the conversion to Christianity of earlier waves of Danish settlers, it is not beyond imagination that Wulfstan conceived of the possibility of Viking conversion. The *Sermo* is not so much a case of demanding repentance because the end of the world is at hand, but of demanding justice even of the invaders. The unifying and salvific force of law, secular and moral, comes to bear in this sermon upon the population of Britain, old and new.

THE SERMO AND DEFIANCE OF THE LAW

The *Sermo* is commonly understood to catalogue the sins of the English and to explain that the Viking devastation results from these sins. In all three versions of the *Sermo* (C, EI, and BH), Wulfstan describes how sin has overtaken the people of England. He enumerates their sins, the resulting perversions of the social order, and the devastating effects of the Viking assaults. He concludes that because the English have earned this punishment by their sin, they also must earn their redemption. He calls on the English to recognize that their sin is bringing on their downfall and to repent. Wulfstan puts the point explicitly in the *Sermo*: “la hwæt! Is ænig oþer on eallum þam gelimpum butan Godes yrre ofer þas þeode swutol ⁊ gesæneþ” (“and lo! what else is there in all these events except God’s anger, clear and evident, over this nation?” l. 100). But precisely whose sin? With some exceptions, critics tend to leave the composition of the nation unexplored, although Hollis spends some time discussing the people’s role in their own downfall. The sinners who bring on this state Hollis apparently identifies with the nation’s

citizens: “Wulfstan describes sins as having been committed by all, or almost all, members of the nation, and a number of phrases...draw attention to the extent to which unrighteousness has spread throughout the nation.”⁷³ By “members of the nation,” Hollis implies citizens of various ethnicities, since the nation is England and its denizens of Anglian, Saxon, Danish, and Celtic origins. The sins of settled Danes would therefore affect England equally as much as sins of Anglo-Saxons, since they are both “members of the nation.” If we examine Wulfstan’s language, the composition of the nation becomes clearer.

The term Wulfstan uses to describe this larger collective is *peod*, people. At the outset of the *Sermo* he says, “Understand þæt eac georne þæt deofol þas peode nu fela geara dwelode to swyþe” (“Moreover, understand carefully that the Devil has led this people astray now for many years,” l. 11). Again he describes the onset of tribulation in part due to the sins “wide gynd þas peode” (“widespread among this people,” l. 47). Again, “Forþam hit is on us eallum swutol ⁊ gesene þæt we ær þysan oftor bræcan þonne we bettan, ⁊ þy is þysse peode fela onsæge” (“Therefore it is clear and well seen in all of us that we have previously more often transgressed than we have amended, and therefore much is greatly assailing this people,” ll. 53–54). He also writes, “Ac sop is þæt ic secge: pearf is þære bote, forþam Godes gerihta wanedan to lange innan þysse peode [ms E: earde] on æghwylcan ende, ⁊ folclaga wyrseðan ealles [ms E: to swyþe, syððan Eadgar geendode]” (“But what I say is true: there is a need for a remedy because God’s dues have diminished too long among this people [ms E: in this land] in every district, and the laws of the people have deteriorated [ms E: all too greatly since Edgar died],” C and I, ll. 37–40;).⁷⁴ This last passage, revealing a revision in manuscript E—Hatton 113 of the late eleventh century—indicates that the later version seems uncomfortable with the significance of *peod* to the communal import of the passage. It was changed to *earde*, land, a more metaphoric and possibly a less politically charged term. Perhaps the later version metaphorically extends the community of the *peod* to all those within the land.⁷⁵

Further developing this theme of how the sins of individuals harms the health of the people, Wulfstan writes, “Nis eac nan wundor þeah us mislimpe, forþam we witan ful georne þæt nu fela geara mænn na ne rohtan foroft hwæt hy worhtan wordes o e dæde, ac wear þes þeodscipe, swa hit þincan mæg, swyþe forsyngod þurh mænigfealde synna ⁊ þurh fela misdæda” (“It is no wonder that there is misfortune among us, because we know full well that now for many years men have too often not cared what they wrought with word or deed; but this people, as one might think, has become sinfully corrupt through manifold sins and through many misdeeds,” EI, ll. 129–33). The misfortune befalls *us* because of the acts of *mænn*, men. The definition of the community is essential to the point since the future of the community depends upon who comprises the people, and which individuals, through the power of belonging, have the power to corrupt or to save the community. Here is one of the clearest examples in Anglo-Saxon prose of the

embassy of literature, the very voice of a community beseeching itself. And the community chooses to accept that voice when it accepts its charge, or to reject that voice when next it sins.

How, then, is Wulfstan's audience characterized, who is this *us* that is afflicted? First, and most importantly, Wulfstan says they are baptized: "we behetan þa þe fulluht underfengan" ("we promised when we received baptism," l. 148). They are therefore Christians. Second, he uses the pronoun *heora*, their, when speaking of the Britons, and says of Gildas, "Se awrat be heora misdædum" ("He wrote of their misdeeds," l. 135). This may suggest that his audience is not ethnically British. And third, he calls his audience *Englum*, English (l. 144). His audience, the *we* to which he refers, therefore seems to be comprised of Christian Englishmen, probably not of British (that is, the Britons) descent. One might imagine individuals of Danish, Norwegian, Anglo-Saxon, Mercian, Pictish, and possibly Irish descent. But given that York was such an international city, as Alcuin described, there is no evidence which necessarily excludes those of other ancestry. Wulfstan appeals especially to a common Christianity, particularly to the beliefs which allow the Old Testament logic of his argument to hold sway, and to a notion of Englishness exclusive of ethnic particularity.

In precisely this common subjection to God's law and English law, the English and the settled Danes exemplify what Anthony Smith declares to be an essential component of nationhood: political unity. The Anglo-Saxons and the settled Danes comprise one people, one *peod*. The term "AngloSaxon" seems therefore anachronistic at this point. Members of Wulfstan's audience were being called upon to renew the community's health; they can be said to participate in the social reconstruction of their community. Thus do they meet a second condition of nationhood. Although Smith imagines the dawn of the nation to have occurred two hundred years after Wulfstan, he describes its formation in the West as having encompassed a changed sense of community, "In the process [of the dawn of nationalism], a new concept of community arose: that of a population bound by ties of politically delimited territory, of allegiance to identical sovereigns and of membership in a common political culture."⁷⁶ Perhaps it is this pre-national sense of community, of a discrete *peod*, rather than a fully fledged sense of nationhood, that constitutes the implied natural relation between the members of Wulfstan's audience. At any rate, Wulfstan's community is defined not as Bede had defined the Angles, as an *ethnie*, nor as an essentially Germanic community like Alfred's *Angelcynn*, but as a multi-ethnic Christian group whose individuals were jointly and actively responsible for the community's fate.

At this point in time, Christianity is implicitly tied in with the sustaining mythology of Anglo-Saxon identity. One of the more important binding aspects of a community, besides its laws and common fate, is its mythology and symbols. Myths and symbols evoke a community and, as Smith writes, "Herein lies their 'community-creating' potency, and here too we find the roots of their directive

capacity. For once unearthed and appropriated, the mythology and symbolism of poetic spaces...casts its own social spell.”⁷⁷ Howe, who has explored the Germanic migration in terms of its role as a defining cultural myth in Anglo-Saxon history, points out that the sustenance of cultural unity is found in the “ordering of experience” which arises from imaginative representations.⁷⁸ Poetic or imagined mythologies create what Smith terms “ethnic maps” as well as defining the morality of a community. In Wulfstan’s *Sermo* we see an ethnic map implied in the collective pronoun *we*, a map comprising Angles, Saxons and Danes. But the morality is entirely Christian, and Wulfstan’s *Sermo* explicitly differentiates those within Christendom from those without. In textual culture, this strong emphasis on the language of morality has led to what one scholar has pejoratively termed “cultural myopia.”⁷⁹ Whether an emphasis on morality in literature is myopic or not, the articulation of a moral code in early eleventh-century England is conditioned ultimately by the mythology of migration and origins, which posits a unified community to whom a religious and secular moral code is relevant. In other words, myths designate a group, which in its development needs an exclusive moral code to help sustain an identifiable and ordered vision of itself.

In fact it is this common moral code within a mythology of shared destiny which gives currency to Wulfstan’s notion of a *peod*. *peod* is very often the Old English choice in translations of the Latin *gentes*, and thereby may be considered a likely candidate for its equivalent. As a typical example, Cambridge University Library Ff. 1.23, an Old English glossed Psalter, uniformly translates *gentes* as *peod*.⁸⁰ As in the revision in ms. E of the *Sermo* discussed above, the distinction between a *peod* and a land is also made in Psalm 28 where *omnes patria gentium* is translated as *ealle e eles peoda*, “all the people of this homeland.” In God’s covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17:4, the term used to translate *gentes* is again *peod*: “þu byst manegra þeoda fæder” (“you will be the father of a multitude of *peoda*”).⁸¹ Augustine defines a people, or *gentes*, as “the association of a multitude of rational beings united by a common agreement on the objects of their love” (18.26, p890). The people is peaceful insofar as the object of its love promotes peace, and just insofar as that object promotes justice. The better the object, the better the people, Augustine argues, and concludes that God ought to be the object of common love. This is one of the fundamental beliefs uniting the community of Christendom.⁸²

Furthermore, the relation of the people to God is homologous to the relation of an individual to God. As God rules the world, so does the soul rule the body; as a people ought to love God, so ought the individual soul be faithful to God. What makes this line of argument especially attractive with respect to Wulfstan is its conclusions concerning a soul turned from God. To Augustine, evil in the world is not a entity, but a privation of good. It arises only from an individual’s failure to turn his or her soul towards God. As Alasdair MacIntyre explains, “This evil is expressed in defiance of divine law and of human law insofar as it is the mirror of divine law; for to consent to evil is precisely to will to offend against the law.”⁸³

The rise of evil, as it is described in the *Sermo*, is not due the encroachment of any substantial entity, as the Antichrist is sometimes portrayed, but to the increased propensity of individuals to turn their souls from God, and thereby to assent to the complete privation of good (the symbol of which is the Antichrist).⁸⁴ Evil in England is expressed, at least as the *Sermo* describes it, as consistent defiance of the laws of God and man, as a privation of allegiance or loyalty to God and king. The Vikings are the symbols of that defiance of the law. (Literary characters posed as Englishmen who oppose Vikings, such as those at Maldon, therefore show their antithesis to privation through an overwhelming loyalty.) This notion of privation is the rationale behind the contention that evil besets a community whose members fall into sin.

In the first part of the *Sermo*, the settled Danes and the Anglo-Saxons are treated as a single community, as a *peod*. Wulfstan further emphasizes their congruence by comparing them together and unfavorably to heathens. Wulfstan says, “On hæpenum þeodum ne deað man forhealdan lytel ne micel þæs þe gelagod is to gedwolgota weor unge, ⁊ we forhealdað æghwær Godes gerihta ealles to gelome” (“Among heathen peoples one does not dare withhold little nor much of that which is appointed to the worship of false gods; and we withhold everywhere God’s dues all too often,” ll. 23–5). A comparison is only appropriate if the things compared share some characteristic in common: here, one such characteristic is the constitution of the groups as *peod*. Both these communities, the English and the heathens, are termed *peoples*. A second characteristic is that both also worship, whether that worship be directed at one divinity or at several. Each people seems to hold an object of devotion in common. Both of these characteristics—a 1) *peod* which 2) worships together—help to emphasize the common identity of the English by visualizing them as a people united in worship. Although Wulfstan complains that the English often fail to worship, while the heathen do not, he implies that the Vikings are capable of Christian behavior. What differentiates them is not their capacity for faith and loyalty, but the objects of that faith and loyalty.

Wulfstan says that the heathens dare not disobey their false gods, while the English commonly disobey the true God. Although he contrasts false gods with the true God, Wulfstan also contrasts the loyalty of the heathens towards their gods with the disloyalty of the English towards their God. This disloyalty comes in the shape of withholding that which is due to God.⁸⁵ In that the English fail to worship properly, they seem therefore in danger of divesting themselves of one of the essential characteristics of a *peod*, common worship. In a community that defines itself in part by its religious practice, failure of an individual to worship in the prescribed manner risks exclusion from the community, just as it risks dissolution of the community itself. This is again emphasized by Wulfstan in the sermon: “micel is nydþearf eac manna gehwiltum þæt he Godes lage gyme heonanforþ georne bet þonne he ær dyde, ⁊ Godes gerihta mid rihte gelæste” (“And it is also a great necessity for *each of men* that he henceforth zealously heed

God's law better than he has done previously, and justly pay God's dues," ll. 25–27, my emphasis). Wulfstan emphasizes it again, "Ac soþ is þæt ic secge: þearf is þære bote forþam Godes gerihta wanedan to lange innan þysse þeode [E: earde] on æghwylcan ænde, ⁊ folclaga wyrsedan ealles to swyþe, syþþan Eadgar geendode" ("But what I say is true: there is need for that remedy because God's dues have diminished too long among this people [E: in this land] in every district, and laws of the people have deteriorated entirely too greatly, since Edgar died," ll. 37–40). Worship is the highest expression of loyalty; it is a pledge of self to subservience, and in a time of trouble, is inflected even with the heroism of the Maldon retainers. The requirement for proper worship to sustain communal identity—combined with the requirement for submission to the secular law—is another reason behind the applicability of Old Testament logic to Wulfstan's articulation of English identity.

Wulfstan also emphasizes the salvific component of a common English identity. He writes, "Forþam hit is on us eallum swutol ⁊ gesene þæt we ær pysan oftor bræcan þonne we bettan, ⁊ þy is þysse þeode fela onsæge. Ne dohte hit nu lange inne ne ute: ac wæs here ⁊ hungor, nu bryne ⁊ blodgyte on gewelhwylcan ende oft ⁊ gelome" ("Therefore it is clear to all of us and well observed that we have previously more often sinned than we have amended, and therefore is this people greatly assailed. Nothing has prospered now for a long time either at home or abroad, but there have been armies and hunger, fire and bloodshed in nearly every district time and again," ll. 48–56). The sins are attributed to the common body—we have sinned—since the sin of a member, as Wulfstan previously stated, becomes common property to all. But one implication of this passage is that as sin is common, so is atonement. Presumably, as an individual who sins affects the community adversely, so does an individual who atones affect the community favorably. And here we may be catching a glimpse of the social rationale behind monastic institutions: their understood participation in the redemption of a community *en masse*.⁸⁶

This may explain why when Wulfstan calls for Peter's pence, he is not doing so out of greed, but because the Church, which has become so underfunded and decayed during the invasions, engages a principle of salvation whereby a group of individuals from the community dedicated to prayer can improve the health of its nation. To Wulfstan, there is an imbalance of sin and atonement, and this imbalance is clearly observable in the phenomena of invasion: armies, hunger, fire, and bloodshed. At the same time, each individual must atone for sin on behalf of the community, since it is on account of an imbalance between sin and atonement that the people suffers: "⁊ þy is þysse þeode fela onsæge." Another implication of this passage is that the *peod* is not geographically defined, but instead delimited by its participation in this process of sin and atonement. Wulfstan says that English distress abates neither "inne ne ute," here nor abroad. But if the sin of an Englishman does not cause the distress of Franks, for example, then with

“ute” Wulfstan can only be referring to English communities abroad. The imbalance of sin and atonement among the English *peod* affects the English *peod* abroad, too. So here again Wulfstan emphasizes the constitutive elements of English identity, religion and subjection to a common law, which apply in all districts of England as well as to Englishmen abroad. Bede, in contrast, was limited by rivers.

Failure to subject oneself to the law is more accurately described as a sort of treachery or disloyalty. Hollis writes of Wulfstan’s *Sermo*, “More precisely it could be described as an indictment of faithlessness, since it is informed by Wulfstan’s consciousness that men have broken faith with God as well as with their fellow man.”⁸⁷ A term Wulfstan uses to great effect in this regard is *ungetreow*, unfaithfulness. He writes, “Forþam on þysan earde wæs, swa hit þincan mæg, nu fela geara unrihta fela ⁊ tealte getrywþa æghwær mid mannum” (“Therefore in this land there have been, as it may appear, many years now of sin and unfaithfulness [disloyalty] everywhere among men,” ll. 59–61) Again, he writes, “Forþam her syn on lande ungetrywþa micle for Gode ⁊ for worolde, ⁊ eac her syn, on earde, on mistlice wisan hlaforðswican manege” (“For there are in this land great disloyalties against God and the world, and there are also in the land many who betray their lords in various ways,” ll. 71–73). Subjection to the law of God and to the law of man is cast in terms of loyalty and disloyalty, perhaps appealing to the audience’s common experiences, and possibly to their knowledge of the Gospels. Luke 12:45–47 tells the parable of the unfaithful or disloyal servant who abuses his position and is unprepared for his master’s return. The term for “unfaithful” used in the Old English version of Luke’s Gospel is also *ungetreowum*.⁸⁸ At its root is the word *treow*, which ranges in meaning through truth, fidelity, faith, trust, belief, pledge, promise, agreement, treaty, favor, grace, kindness, and a credibility or confederacy.⁸⁹ The prefix *un-* in combination negates these qualities and therefore might mean a lack of faith or the breaking of a pledge or allegiance.

The story of the unfaithful or disloyal servant is particularly apropos to the sermon in this regard, but it also alerts us to the Scriptural echoes of the *Sermo*. Wulfstan writes:

⁊ ful micel hlaforðswice eac biþ on worolde þæt man his hlaforð of life forræde, oþþon of lande lifriendne drife, ⁊ ægþer is geworden on þysan earde: Eadweard man forrædde, ⁊ syþþan acwealde ⁊ æfter þam forbærnde; [and Æþelred mon dræfde ut of his earde.]

(And a very great betrayal of a lord it is also in the world that a man betray his lord of life, or drive him living from the land, and either have come to pass in this land: Edward was betrayed, and then killed, and after that burned; [BH only: and men drove Æthelred out of his land.] (ll. 74–78).

The phrase “of life forræde” also appears in Wulfstan’s *De Fide Catholica*, On the Christian Faith, in which he describes Christ’s willing death at the hands of men in precisely these terms.⁹⁰ Again, Wulfstan implicitly links the secular and divine realms, faith to God and allegiance to man, here in terms of the loyalty due a lord and the Lord. Fidelity to sovereigns, to faith, and to the laws of God and man seems to define the scope of Wulfstan’s appeal to his audience. That he appeals to these factors in his *Sermo* suggests they had some behavioral force or cultural resonance. Notably, he does not appeal to a common cultural myth, nor to a story of origins, nor to a lost golden age, nor does he invoke ethnic particularity. The thrust of his appeal takes its strength from the power of fidelity and loyalty to provoke a change in mores. Wulfstan has cast sin as a case of disloyalty to the Lord, and likened it to a thane’s disloyalty to his lord, to Edward and to Æthelred, and, as I will argue, to Byrhtnoth. Moreover, this appeal to loyalty takes place with the tacit understanding that the disloyalty of one Englishman will adversely affect all of England to some degree. Dane, Angle, or Saxon, the individual members of the community of the English are tied together by their common fate, which in turn is determined by a divine logic balancing sin against atonement. English identity in the *Sermo* is forged within these parameters. But unlike the paradigm of Old Testament identity as it was employed by Bede, Wulfstan does not emphasize a common ethnic or familial heritage. Instead his emphasis is, as it is in so many of his sermons, on the proper aims and practices of Christians. What Hollis refers to in her critique as “the nation’s values” are in fact these Christian virtues.⁹¹ Thus, Wulfstan appeals to a common English identity by appealing first to the moral space in which identity is articulated.

Wulfstan’s notion of English identity as it is manifested in his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* indicates that to him ethnic identity is secondary to a legal and moral identity. Unlike Bede, who had articulated an ethnic foundation to an inclusive religious identity, and unlike Alfred who had articulated an ethnic foundation to a religio-political identity, Wulfstan seems to be articulating a legal and moral foundation to an inclusive national identity. Whether this is representative of the views of his contemporaries or not, Wulfstan, archbishop of York, provides us in his sermons with an important view of ethnic identity in Anglo-Saxon England. This view, which diminishes ethnicity in the face of a moral and legal community, seems to have played a fundamental role in the transfer of dominion from the Anglo-Danes and Anglo-Saxons to the Normans. Nevertheless, with the onset of Norman rule, issues of ethnicity and ethnogenesis arose anew. In the next chapter, I examine the recurrence of stories of ethnogenesis, which soon put the force of ethnicity at the service of historical identity. Whereas the kernel of tradition had been shaped and reshaped by Bede, Alfred, and Wulfstan, with the Norman invasion came a new kernel of tradition to compete in the popular imagination: the European story of Trojan origins.

CHAPTER FIVE

Woden and Troy

subiectit populos nobis et gentes sub pedibus nostris

—Psalm 46 (47):4¹

The Orosian inheritance, as I argued with respect to the Alfredian *World History*, emphasized the foundational role of Alaric the Goth in the perceived Germanic imperial origins of Christendom. Through the effort of Charlemagne, the Germanic *imperium* formed a legal and ecclesiastical basis for a potential western European identity, a basis which, in its later AngloSaxon permutation, seems to undergird Archbishop Wulfstan's combined legislative and ecclesiastical efforts. For the Anglo-Saxons generally, their ethnic origins did not emerge from Rome, but from her Germanic conquerors. Because the Roman *imperium* passed to Charlemagne's Germanic empire—whose cultural foundations were imported, along with Carolingian advisors, by Alfred—Anglo-Saxons origins, especially the Bedan inheritance, came to be expressed within the historical model of Christendom. The Norman invasion of 1066 and its aftermath transformed Anglo-Saxon England and this sense of identity. One of the effects of this momentous invasion was the introduction into English ethnogenesis of a new story of origins, one which would prove extremely popular until well into the sixteenth century. This story competed with the Bedan inheritance to reshape and then displace the kernel of tradition such that the indigenous postinvasion polity began to offer an ethnic identity to itself exclusive of both French and Anglo-Saxon ethnic history. Norman writers sought their own origins, and it was the rise of those origins in the public voice of literary culture—specifically within a Norman elite—which serves as a turning point in English ethnogenesis and thus redefines the community to which early English literature addresses itself. It was to Norman in preference to Anglo-Saxon stories that the new governing polity listened for its history, entertainment, and identity.

Anglo-Norman stories of origins put the center of English identity in the antique Mediterranean, thus giving the new English origins a sense of authority as ancient as Rome's own origins. In France, Norman stories of origins related that the Franks

and then the Danes (from whom the Normans descend) are descendants of Homer's Troy, and thus an *ethnie* within the Roman familial inheritance. At the same time, Anglo-Saxons were beginning to treat their own mythic past, especially descent from Woden, as a historical event. According to the divisions made in Anglo-Saxon England, the Trojan dispersion occurred during the third age of the world, while the historical lineage of Woden appears to have put him in the fourth age of the world. Whether or not the relative antiquity of Trojan origins recommended itself to the Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Saxon polity, it appears that Trojan origins replace the kernel of Anglo-Saxon ethnic tradition fairly soon after 1066. Nevertheless, the influence of Bede is felt heavily with respect to the model the *Historia Ecclesiastica* provides for Norman, Anglo-Norman, and English histories of this period. Anglo-Saxon stories sought to redefine their own ethnic tradition by appealing to a sense of inherited, historical kingship and kinship, thus drawing mythical origins into historical time. By the late tenth century, Anglo-Saxon ethnic identity was taken from the realm of pagan myths to the realm of royal genealogy. This more historical, but more modern lineage came up against the ancient Trojan pedigree of the Normans. The Norman stories, which were at first told only of the Franks, helped to establish an initial ethnic distinction between Anglo-Saxons and their Norman conquerors. With the Norman ascendancy in England, and the consequent development of an Anglo-Norman civilization, the Anglo-Saxon story of ethnogenesis, until its reemergence in the sixteenth-century popular imagination, is all but displaced.

The Trojan story of origins has certainly been noted, but not its effect on Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis. Stories of origins were cautiously handled by nineteenth-century historians, and only in recent years has the story of Trojan origins been reconsidered as possibly effecting a historical consciousness of the Anglo-Norman *gens* and the postinvasion English polity.² In this chapter, I discuss eleventh- and twelfth-century Norman stories of origins and their Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman counterparts. I catalogue stories of origins extant in textual culture in the generations preceding and immediately proceeding the Norman invasion. First, I discuss some of the ethnic tensions which have characterized studies of Norman origins. Anglo-Saxonists will be familiar with similar ethnic considerations at play in the nineteenth century, especially with the recovery of *Beowulf* as a Danish antiquity by Grímur Thorkelin in 1786, published in 1815.³ The primary ethnic tension was between Scandinavian and French academics who sought to recover Norman achievements in the pursuit of their own contemporary national glory. Second, I look to the historicizing of the Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis, especially to the treatment of Woden as an early king rather than a god. I also note the persistence of Old Testament logic in these treatments. Third, I look to Norman stories of origins and describe how they are constructed according to a pattern evident in Bede. Finally, I turn to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who employs both Anglo-Saxon stories of origins and Norman stories of origins in an almost mythic narrative

which takes place during the third age of the world, and which justifies historically the French domination of Anglo-Saxon England. It is Geoffrey, I argue, who marks the end of AngloSaxon ethnogenesis.

The substitution of Trojan for Anglo-Saxon origins serves as a turning point in English ethnogenesis and in the study of Anglo-Saxon literature. The relative and competing strength of these originary myths characterize much of Anglo-Saxon scholarship. As Allen J. Frantzen has described it, "From the moment of their inception in the sixteenth century, Anglo-Saxon studies were used to explore, define, and propagate fundamental ideas about what made the English 'English.'"⁴ One might add that Anglo-Saxon studies also help to determine what ought to be considered English literature and what not. For example, Geoffrey Gaimar, an early twelfth-century AngloNorman poet possibly of Lincolnshire, wrote a verse history of the English (in Anglo-Norman) which introduced the famous stories of Havelock the Dane and King Cnut and the waves. At one point, he also treats the Norman invasion from an Anglo-Saxon point of view. His great poem, *Lestoire des Engles* ("The History of the English"), has, as of this writing, yet to be translated into English, and one wonders why such an important piece of insular literature is not commonly considered part of the English canon (I discuss Gaimar below).⁵ One of the fundamental divides at the heart of English identity (and consequently, of the canon of English literature) concerns the Continental origins of the English, whether they be Germanic or Norman, Northern or Mediterranean. Hugh MacDougall has written on the competition between these two mythic origins from the sixteenth century up until the present day. The ascendancy of a myth of German origins, termed "Anglo-Saxonism" or "Germanism," "played an important role in the [perceived] historic march of England from rude beginnings to nationhood and empire."⁶ It also influences the literature we consider English or of English origin.

The perception of an exclusive Germanic character has been common coin in studies of Anglo-Saxon England until relatively recently. In 1874, Bishop Stubbs in his *Constitutional History* distinguished two discrete systems of political organization in England, a Germanic one before 1066, and a Norman one after 1066. It was the earlier system that was essentially English by being thoroughly Germanic. Anglo-Saxon poetry was thought to echo these ethno-national characteristics in distinction to French poetry and French ethno-national characteristics.⁷ In 1946, Sir Frank Stenton characterized Anglo-Saxon England:

In origin, and in essential features which were discernible to the end, AngloSaxon England was a land of village communities composed of peasants who were free and responsible members of society. Its customs, laws, and institutions were Germanic, drawing nothing of vital significance from either British or Roman antecedents.⁸

Stenton certainly was aware, as scholars are today, that British and Roman antecedents were extremely important to the Anglo-Saxons. But Stenton had inherited from Stubbs and Edward A. Freeman before him a historical narrative which began with “a primitive constitutionalism” brought to Anglo-Saxon England by Germanic invaders, suppressed “under autocratic foreign kings,” and resurfaced later “in the medieval English parliament.” In Stenton’s view, feudalism was an alien and tyrannical institution, which alien (read French) tyrants had pressed upon unwilling Anglo-Saxons.⁹ Dorothy Whitelock, at her inauguration as Rawlinson Professor of Anglo-Saxon at the University of Oxford, also emphasized the importance of the survival of Germanic traditions in spite of the Norman Conquest.¹⁰ Both Stenton and Whitelock, and their academic forebears, thought the Normans and the English represented two distinct peoples whose character and traditions (and, one presumes, literatures) stood essentially at odds. And certainly, the evidence initially lends itself to such a conclusion, if not throughout the eleventh century, then at least at the Conquest. William the Conqueror’s laws, after all, distinguished between English (*Anglicus*) men and French men (*Francigenus*).¹¹ But to speak of the English as Germanic, and the Normans as something else is to raise the question, What else?

Sustaining a perception of difference in both Anglo-Saxon England and in much of the scholarship of Anglo-Saxonists are stories of origins. The ethnogenesis authorized by Bede, transformed by Alfred, and reshaped by Wulfstan suddenly found itself in competition with a Continental story for the embassy of an English voice. While Norman historians of the tenth and early eleventh centuries built upon the ancient mythology of Continental origins, Anglo-Saxons of the same period maintained their own story of origins. In doing so, they maintained an independent past and thus an independent historical identity. Like the Anglo-Saxons, the Continental Normans shared a sense of community authorized by a storied past, a community apparently acknowledged by their Continental neighbors. The late eleventh-century Black Book of Saint-Ouen, for example, contains a list of the virtues and vices of various *gentes*, the Normans among them (they are said to be rapacious and to have “the ability to act together,” qualities which were culled from their viking history).¹² This community, as Leah Shopkow points out, was sometimes asserted by Norman historians at the expense of what one might call historical accuracy, but it accorded with a received notion of historical truth. She writes, “If history was a sort of literature that made a truth-claim, the degree to which each history could substantiate that claim was less important to readers than other considerations.”¹³ One of those considerations, for example, concerned the authority of the Norman nobility and its right to the English throne. The Anglo-Saxon past and the Norman past were both molded to explain the present, even if this required some inventive interpretation of imagined events. In this enterprise, stories of origins, although ultimately fictions, helped

to shape the self-perceptions of individuals and communities. And for us, it may help to authorize which texts belong to which literary tradition.

SCANDINAVIAN, NORMAN, AND ANGLO-NORMAN ETHNOGENESIS

Norman ethnogenesis has shifted in the scholarly literature from being an expression of material ethnic realities to being an expression of a wholly invented past. For much of this century, interpretations of Norman history have been balanced between competing national traditions, specifically French and Scandinavian ones. For example, in 1915, the famous American medievalist Charles Homer Haskins wrote that the Normans, descendants of Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes have “become the common heritage of the Scandinavian race.”¹⁴ The Scandinavian heritage of the Normans competed with a Gaulish one, and scholars sought to emphasize one or another ethnic component, possibly for ulterior reasons.¹⁵ Perhaps in an attempt to extricate scholarship from this deadlock, and in keeping with the constructed character of the Norman story of origins itself, R.H.C.Davis suggested in 1976 that the Norman identity was not so much an ethnic reality, but a function of Norman historiography:

The fact which must strike any student of the Normans is the large number of historians they produced in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; one gets the impression that they could not stop talking about themselves. Perhaps that is why they seemed so sure of their identity; or, perhaps their uncertainty bred ethnic history. For if peoples are formed, not by race or language, but by a common political, military, or emotional experience, they can remain peoples only so long as that experience is kept alive, by handing on the story of it from generation to generation. A voice speaking on behalf of a nation calls a nation into being. Alternatively, if a nation without a history is a contradiction in terms, then what was being voiced by the creators of myth?¹⁶

The myth, Davis argues, is the notion of the Normans being a single people, of their history offering “an inherent unity”—a notion illustrated best in the *Ecclesiastical History* of the early twelfth-century Anglo-Norman historian Orderic Vitalis, a self-styled Englishman from Atcham near Shrewsbury, and also a monk in Normandy.¹⁷ Elisabeth van Houts has lately traced the inception of the Norman myth, not to Orderic, but to Dudo of St. Quentin, whose purpose was “to legitimise the arrival and, more importantly, the settlement of the Vikings in Normandy.”¹⁸ G.A.Loud has shown that to the Normans after Dudo, “the idea of common descent as a key element in the identity of the *gens* was so well-established as to be fundamental in the Normans’ own conception of themselves.” One of the more important elements was a story of origins: “An *origo* legend was

as essential a concomitant to the Normans' standing as a race as the creation of a typology for the *gens*." And the legend that stood behind the conception of the *gens Normannorum* was their descent from the Trojans.¹⁹

Norman ethnogenesis is thus based on a wholly constructed history, but, again, this does not mean it was considered false, even though it may have been considered counter-factual.²⁰ Loud makes it clear that "Norman writers were drawing on the common stock of early medieval ideas on the constitution of a people. They did not create a pattern; they conformed to one." This pattern is garnered from the ethno-histories of the early Middle Ages, such as those by Gregory of Tours, Jordanes, Isidore of Seville, and especially Bede, all of which "provided sources for a literary concept of racial distinctiveness."²¹ I have discussed this literary concept with respect to Bede's influence on Alfred and Wulfstan in earlier chapters. While we cannot be certain whether the Bedan ethnogenesis is similarly constructed with respect to an Anglian people or whether it provokes the material realities of ethnic distinction, the Norman histories of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries offer some of the clearest examples of textual identity, of the instantiation and maintenance of an entirely literary ethnogenesis. Eleanor Searle argues that in Dudo the Normans found an "encomiast" who would meet their requirement for "a patterning of their past that would account for their destiny." She reports that the purported founder of the Norman race, Rollo, is patterned after Æneas: "Like the Trojan, driven from his homeland to wander and endure, Rollo is driven from Denmark Like the founder of Rome and ancestor of Virgil's patron, Rollo is to refound the city of Dudo's patron: Rouen."²² But Rollo's Trojan heritage (which is asserted only metaphorically by Dudo), howsoever it might serve to provide a common context for competing Viking and Gaulish identities in Norman France, applied only partially to the conquerors of England. This is because the conquerors were not only Norman, but were also from Picardy, Flanders, and Brittany. The Continental conquerors, who came to be known to history as AngloNormans, recognized their own internal ethnic divisions. Thus, the Chancery formula that developed in post-Conquest England, "Franci et Angli" represents not a collective French ethnic identity, but only the local fact that "all could identify themselves primarily as speaking the language of the French."²³

A distinction in Norman and Anglo-Norman historiography between English and Norman peoples is above and beyond that of language, and goes directly to ethnogenesis. At a very superficial level, Englishmen appear to have distinguished themselves from the Normans and Anglo-Normans largely on the basis of language, French and English, while Norman and Anglo-Norman historians further distinguished between the various Frenchspeaking peoples that comprised the invasion force, for example Burgundians and Bretons. We see here a possible example of what Isidore of Seville claimed was the creation of tribes out of languages, and not *vice versa*. What are considered English sources for the most

part call all the invaders French and seem to take little interest in their past.²⁴ D.J.A. Matthew reports that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, for example, makes “no reference at all to the early history of Normandy. Appropriate insertions, in Latin, were therefore made...” In fact, “the word Normandy does not appear in the text until 1066 itself,” and, as the *Chronicle* shows, only as a place name, not as an ethnic designation.²⁵ Matthew broadly concludes, “The English did not adopt the Normans’ own preferred way of speaking of themselves as Normans.”²⁶ Ian Short suggests that the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, particularly those with family of Anglo-Saxon extraction, came quickly to consider themselves part of England’s social landscape more so than of France’s.²⁷ David Crouch confirms this: “The great majority of the knightly families of the shires, even if of French extraction, would have become exclusively ‘English’ in attachment. Those of English extraction...may never have considered themselves Anglo-Norman at all.” Furthermore, “English knightly society was certainly localized and particularist, and was...xenophobic also.”²⁸

These feelings notwithstanding, in a more practical regard, French ancestry, at least to its critics, was extremely important for advancement and preferment in post-Conquest England. William of Malmesbury, who wrote his *De gestis Regum Anglorum* as a story of “nostra gens” (“our people”), complained to his English brethren in 1118, “England is become the residence of foreigners and the property of strangers; at the present time there is no Englishman who is either earl, bishop or abbot; strangers all, they prey upon the riches and vitals of England.”²⁹ This complaint suggests that it was ancestry, not speaking the French language, that was considered important, since many courtiers and ecclesiastics of English ancestry spoke French.³⁰ This complaint further suggests a deep cultural division which obtained in society, but not necessarily in literary production, as the earlier example of the French Englishman Geoffrey Gaimar indicates. French origins—that is, Norman, Frankish, Breton, and Burgundian origins especially—were valued over Anglo-Saxon ones in ecclesiastical, legislative, and courtly contexts so quickly dominated by the Anglo-Norman language. And in the spate of remarkable histories produced in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, these origins were standardized in stories of communal ancestry, of ethnogenesis. These histories depended on Bede not only for information, but also for the pattern by which the continuity and conformity of an ethnic collective was expressed. It was these stories of Norman origins patterned on Anglo-Saxon ones which made the Normans into a single *gens*. One of the more attractive stories of origins concerned Troy. But as this story was being shaped in Normandy, Anglo-Saxons were historicizing their own origins.

ANGLO-SAXON ORIGINS AND TROY

The Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis has a distinguished pedigree. This is the story in Bede and repeated by later writers which tells of the tripartite Germanic origin of the English people. Whatever the precise matrices of identity operative at any given time in Anglo-Saxon England, the prevalent story of ethnogenesis continued to depend upon this Bedan inheritance. As I suggested earlier, Bede provided the archetext for English ethnogenesis, and even the Normans, in adapting their own story of origins to prevailing historical patterns in Normandy, were forged under Bede's weighty influence. Typically, the Bedan inheritance continued to be altered slightly to speak to the expectations of the times. The Anglo-Norman monk, Orderic Vitalis, for example, was especially alert to the narrative pattern of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* as a universal history telling the continuous story of a single people. Bede's *HE* provided the material for Orderic's history, although only as that material came to be seen through the lens of three or four hundred years of accumulated memory. But generally, the Bedan ethnic inheritance is not much changed in post-Conquest England, even though it comes to be overshadowed by its Norman interloper. There are slight changes, but the more significant aspects of post-Conquest Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis concern a shift in the relation of the present to the mythic past. Thus, a characteristic of later Anglo-Saxon historiography, and one which may have resulted in part from an inexplicable desire of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Danish communities to assert their historical rather than fabulous origins, was the translation of mythical ancestors into historical persons.

Just as some Normans in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries claim to have descended from Antenor and Priam, to them historical persons, so did some Anglo-Saxons come to see their own Germanic and Scandinavian ancestors as historical persons. In other words, the Bedan story of origins was retold within the generic standards met generally by the Anglo-Norman historians of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. These retellings reshaped the ethnic distinctions which underlay the versions current in the ages of Bede, Alfred, and Wulfstan. The most important example is Woden who came to be thought of as a king rather than a god, a process called *euhermerism*.³¹ Thus, descent from a god was recast as descent from a founding king. What had once been an ethnogenesis which reached into the blood of a mythical past soon became an ethnogenesis which sought to establish itself in the political continuity of historical time. Thus were writers such as Æthelweard, Eadmer, Symeon of Durham, Hugh the Chanter, Henry of Huntingdon, William of Malmesbury, William of Newburgh, and Aelred of Rievaulx able to present "the pre-Conquest past as part of a 'continuous history of England', [and help]...to weld English and Normans into a new nation."³² Although some of these historians were partly of Norman or Breton ancestry, most seem to have maintained a more political sense of English identity as they came

to incorporate the Norman Conquest into their revised national mythology. And yet historians were revising their mythic pasts before the advent of the Normans.

One such rewriting of the mythic past comes in Æthelweard's *Chronicle*, composed at the end of the millennium and during the Age of Wulfstan, and extant in a single eleventh-century manuscript. Æthelweard, a patron to Ælfric, was the first layman to write a history of England—he cribbed it from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. In his preface, he describes himself as a descendent of King Alfred, through Alfred's brother, King Æthelred I. He dedicates his work to his relative Matilda, abbess of Essen (949–1011), who is also descended from Alfred. He says his work explores “communis prosapiæ, generis quoque et migratione” (“our common stock, its genesis and migration”).³³ Æthelweard is referring to his and Matilda's common lineage, literally their family history. Notwithstanding his great lexical and grammatical idiosyncrasies, Æthelweard describes this lineage with some significant deviations from the Bedan tradition on which he largely depends. After describing how the Britons break their agreement with the Saxons under Hengist and Horsa, Æthelweard relates, “Ergo illa advectio ex tribus provinciis, quæ tum eminentiores habebantur Germaniæ, venisse leguntur, hoc est de Saxonia, Anglia, atque Giota” (“And that migration is observed to have come from out of a third part of the provinces, which were then held to be the most eminent of Germany, that is of the Saxons, Angles, and Goths”).³⁴ The term *Giota* is unknown in classical Latin but it is a synonym for Goth.³⁵ Æthelweard uses the more common term *Gothis* to refer to the tribe that overthrew Rome. Again, Bede's word is *lutae*, and the Old English word is *Geatum*. With the two terms *Giota* and *Gothis*, Æthelweard may be indicating his participation in a tradition which sees two Gothic peoples deriving from a single Gothic tribe, one people Northern, the other Mediterranean. In other words, Æthelweard may be bifurcating Bede's *lutae* by implying a distinct Northern Gothic people, *Giota*. Or, he may have coined the term as a reflex of Bede's *lutae*. Further on in his *Chronicle*, Æthelweard distinguishes a number of tribes from among the northern Gothic peoples while at the same time suggesting their consanguinity, combining “Dani, Northmanni quoque, et Suevi” (“Danes, Nor[th]men, and Suebi”).³⁶

But Æthelweard's foray into ethnogenesis, especially his resurrection of Bede's ethnic distinctions, inspires some confusion while it obviously aims at emphasizing the Germanic consanguinity. The men of Kent and of the Isle of Wight, he says, derive their origins from the Goths. Then, he notes that from *Saxonia*, today called Old Saxony, “*Saxonia vetus*,” came the following tribes: “Eastsexan, et Suthsexan, et Westsexan” (“East Saxons, and South Saxons, and West Saxons”). He remarks that these are English names, (“quæ apud Anglos modo ita dicuntur”) and gives their Latin equivalents as they can be found in Bede. *Saxonia* is not called a province, which might imply ecclesiastical or Roman geographical limits, but is instead treated as the vernacular name of a region. Alistair Campbell has remarked of Æthelweard in this regard that “national and

tribal names [are] used as virtual place names" (lvi). It also may be that Æthelweard actually regarded them as places, seeing tribal origins intimately linked with geography. From Anglia, or rather from the province of the Angles, Æthelweard says, next came ("venere iuxta") the "Orientalis Angli, Medii Angli, Mercii quoque, et tota gens Northanhymbrorum" ("East Angles, Middle Angles, also Mercians, and all the Northumbrian peoples," p. 9). Notably, primacy of arrival is granted the Saxons, where the Angles held it in Bede. Æthelweard does not offer the indigenous name of these Anglian tribes as he does for the Saxon conglomerate. He appears next to invent *Anglia vetus*, Old Anglia, the purported homeland called *Angulus* by Bede, and which Bede had declared entirely abandoned. Æthelweard does note that the capital of Old Anglia is called Schleswig in the "sermone Saxonico" ("Saxon language"), this phrase setting the English language in apposition to the Saxon one, presumable Old Saxon. Englishmen and Saxons spoke different languages at this time.

There are some other considerations concerning this reinterpretation of Bede's Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis. Most importantly for the fate of the Angles, Æthelweard introduces the terms *iuxta* and *igitur* into the Bedan equation, establishing for the first time an order of arrival. First came the Saxons, then came the Angles. This contention on Æthelweard's part is later muddled by his description of the invitation to the Germans by Vortigern, in which all the tribes are called Saxons. A second consideration: Æthelweard defers to the Angles in describing the etymology of the name of the country, "Anglia appellatur, assumens nomen victorum" ("is called *Anglia*, having assumed the name of the victors"). Here, Anglia appears to mean England, deriving its name from a conglomerate of Angles, Saxons, and Goths. The distinction Bede had drawn between the Angles and the Saxons is not a consideration for Æthelweard. Instead, England takes its name from the name of the language spoken there by the Anglo-Saxons, rather than from the tribe of Angles. The language in which East Saxons are named is English, *Anglos*, as opposed to the language in which Schleswig is named, which is Saxon, *Saxonico*. Generally, Æthelweard is indiscriminate in naming the Germanic conglomerate, which is sometimes called Saxon, sometimes Angle. Perhaps this is because he considers the Germanic population of England as a single entity only nominally divided into tribal origins. A common language appears to unite what origins stories had divided. When the Saxons sent word back to the Continent about the weak Britons, they did so to the Saxon *populus*, a term which Æthelweard may be using to encompass the entire population of the three provinces of Germany—Anglian, Saxon, and Gothic. Thus, the Continental tribes seem to be considered a single people by Æthelweard even before they leave the Continent.

A third consideration concerns the role of Woden as a common ancestor to all the Germanic tribes, thus establishing their familial relation. The divine status of Woden, which for Æthelweard taints the prehistory of the AngloSaxons with

heathen practice, is explained by him through a number of assertions that Woden was actually a king, not a god. In book One, [chapter three](#), he calls Woden “regis barbarorum” (“a king of the barbarians”), and again in [chapter four](#), “qui et rex multitudinis barbarorum” (“who was a king of a multitude of barbarians”). As to Woden’s one-time status as a god, Æthelweard writes, “In tanta etenim seductione oppressi aquilones increduli ut deum colunt usque in hodiernam diem” (“The heathen northern peoples are overwhelmed in so great a seduction that they worship [him] as a god to the present day”).³⁷ This historicizing of Woden is not unique to Æthelweard nor to the later Anglo-Saxon historiographical tradition.

Aelred of Rievaulx also treats Woden as a historical person. Aelred was born in Hexham around 1110 of “fine old English stock,” according to Jocelyn of Furness in his *Life of St. Waldef*. Aelred wrote the *Genealogia regum Anglorum* in 1153 or 1154 at the behest of Henry, Duke of Normandy. Ann Williams notes that this work

traces Henry’s English ancestors back to Woden. All are praised, even Æthelred II, who appears as *strenuissimus* rather than *unræd*. The purpose of the tract, “which is redolent with pride in Englishness”, is to show the young duke “that his true national identity is as Henry the Englishman, Henry the English king.”³⁸

Here is an example of how ethnic identity, especially French or English, is sought in the lineage of the past, rather than in the political realities of the present. In one passage, he glorifies the ancestry of the English Queen Mathilda, wife to Henry I (1100–1135), and daughter of Edgar ætheling, the last West Saxon heir to the throne. Aelred traces her lineage to Ine, and then to Gewis. Of Gewis, he says, “Iste fuit caput gentis suae, a quo et tota gens illa nomen accepit” (“He was the source of your peoples, and from whom all the *gens* took its name”). Gewis is apparently the ancestor of the Gewisse, who early on fell under the lordship of the West Saxons. Aelred continues,

Hujus pater fuit Wig, cujus pater fuit Frewine, cujus pater Freodgar, cujus pater Brand, cujus pater Bealdag, cujus pater Woden. Qui fuit filius Fredewald, qui fuit Freolof, . . . qui fuit Geta, . . . qui fuit Sem, cujus pater Noe, cujus pater Lamech, . . . qui fuit Enos, qui fuit Seth, qui fuit filius Adam patris omnium.

(The father of Gewis was Wig, whose father was Frewin, whose father was Freodgar, whose father was Brand, whose father was Woden. He was the son of Fredewald, son of Freolof, . . . son of Geat, . . . son of Shem, whose father was Noah, whose father was Lamech, . . . whose father was Enos, son of Seth, whose father was Adam, father of all.)³⁹

The paternity of Woden is not qualified, neither is his issue. In other words, the intermingling of what we might consider historical persons with what we might consider mythical persons does not seem to have been at issue for Aelred. Woden appears to enjoy the same historical status as the others mentioned in the list, including both King Edward and Geat. He writes, “Ab isto igitur Sem genealogia ducitur usque ad Woden, qui tantae auctoritatis fuit apud suos” (“Therefore, according to this, the genealogy of Shem leads to Woden, who, of great origins, was before you”). What we might be seeing here is a historicization of Germanic ancestors of the English in a line of descent from Noah’s first son, Shem. This suspicion is confirmed when Aelred also notes, as Æthelweard had, the fact that Woden was mistakenly considered a god by the early Germanic settlers, as was Geat, “qui et ipse tantae sapientiae et virtutis habitus est, ut a paganis pro Deo coleretur” (“who was of such great wisdom and virtue that the pagans honored him as a god”). Most importantly, this genealogy puts Geat, ancestors of the AngloSaxons, into a familial line distinct from the *origo* of the Goths, who descended from Japheth, Noah’s third son. This Anglo-Saxon descent from Shem includes, although it does not explicitly mention, Abraham, nine generations removed from Shem.

Aelred was not alone in his treatment of Woden as a historical person. Symeon of Durham (1060–1135) also historicized the genealogies of Woden in his *De Primo Saxonum Adventu*. Woden, he says, is ancestor to Hengist, Horsa, and Ælle, from whom all English kings proceed. Most importantly, he equates the *gens Anglorum* with the *gens Saxonum* without qualification. He treats Bede’s Angles, Saxons, and Jutes as a single Germanic people. He writes, “Anglorum, sive Saxonum, gens, invitata a rege Wurigerno” (“the English, or Saxon, *gens* was invited by king Vortigern”). The *adventus* involved “tribus Germaniæ populis fortioribus, id est Saxonibus, Anglis, Jutis” (“Germanic tribes, the braver peoples, that is the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes”).⁴⁰ He then repeats Bede’s story verbatim, to the extent that he anachronistically includes Bede’s “usque hodie” (“to this day”). Again, the Germanic people are the focus of the ethnology, and their tribal divisions of secondary consequence. Against the irruptions caused by the Norman invasion, Symeon, or whoever compiled the *Historia Regum* to which the *De Primo* appears to be an addition, sought to preserve traditions that might be lost. One continuation of the *Historia*, labeled anno 1066, speaks of *gentis*, or tribes of the Norman *gens*.⁴¹ Here, the Normans are seen to be on ethnic par with the Anglo-Saxon *gens*, two *gens* who respectively comprise a number of constitutive tribes. This treatment of the Normans as a *gens* unto themselves is not unique to Symeon. In 1008, Heregarus, in his life of St. Landóald, also refers to a *gens Normannorum*. So does Wibertus in his *Sancti Leonis Vita* of 1054. Much later, in her life of St. Rupert, Hildegard of Bingen describes the tyranny of the *gens Normannorum*.⁴² Hugh the Chanter, author of the *History of the Church of York*, a local history written around 1130, call the invaders *Francigenis*, which looks to be a

concatenation of *Franci* and *gens*, similarly construing the invaders as a *gens*.⁴³ The existence of the Normans as a *gens* indicates a notion of *gens* which references both familial and territorial boundaries.

A territorial notion of a *gens*, perhaps a move away from a *gens* defined by a mythic or historical ancestor, may help to explain Henry of Huntingdon's addition to the Bedan ethnogenesis. In his *Historia Angloru'm* of 1129–1154, Henry does not stray far from Bede, but when he does, the differences are illuminating.⁴⁴ In II, i, he quotes much of Bede, *H.E.*, I.xv. Henry begins,

Advenerunt autem de tribus Germanie populus fortioribus, id est Saxonibus, Anglis, Iutis. De Iutarum origine sunt Cantuarii et Victuarii, hoc est ea gens que Vectam tenet insulam, et ea que usque hodie in provincia occidentalium Saxonum Iutarum natio nominatur, posita contra ipsam insulam Vectam.

(They came from tribes, the braver of the people out of Germany, that is, from the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. Originating from the Jutes are the people of Kent and the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight. This is that *gens* that holds the Isle of Wight, and that which to this day within the province of the West Saxons is called the Jutish nation, and is settled opposite the Isle of Wight.)

Aside from the addition of an extra “i” in Bede’s “Cantuari” and the shift of declension of “populus” (Bede’s “populis”), the only other change in this section is what appears to be the treatment of “Germania” (“Germany”) as a third declension noun in the locative (“out of Germany”), rather than as a first declension adjective, “Germaniæ” (“Germanic”), as both Bede and Symeon seem to have treated it. Bede writes, “Advenerunt autem de tribus Germaniæ populis fortioribus, id est Saxonibus, Anglis, Iutis” (“They came from the braver tribes of the Germanic people, that is from the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes”).⁴⁵ Bede’s adjective has become Henry’s noun. This almost imperceptible adjustment in the word significantly changes its semantic force, and the meaning of the respective phrases is consequently quite different. Bede’s use of *Germania* emphasizes the genus of the tribes whereas Henry’s use emphasizes geography. They are Germanic tribes, says Bede; they are tribes out of Germany, says Henry. It is a very subtle difference, but it may indicate Henry’s inclination towards a more geographically defined ethnogenesis after the pattern set by the Norman ethnogenesis.

The familial boundaries of communal identity are still in evidence, although there seems to be some skepticism on Henry’s part when relating the origins of the Franks in Troy. Rather than report the Trojan origins of the Franks directly, Henry intriguingly puts the suspect tale in the mouth of an anonymous Frenchman. In 1128, King Henry went to Normandy (*Normannia*), which is called an area of France, to march against the French “quia rex Francorum tuebatur nepotem et hostem suum” (“because the French king was supporting his nephew and enemy,”

VII, 38). While there, he inquired into the origins of the Franks. To his question, “quidam non indoctus” (“someone who was not uneducated”) told him that “sic plereque gentes Europe, ita Franci a Troianis duxerunt originem” (“like most nations in Europe, the Franks took their origin from the Trojans”). The speaker warns Henry that if the Franks show the same bravery as their ancestors, they will certainly be no easy opponent. Immediately upon that warning, the king went to Normandy. The story is interesting not least because Trojan origins are attributed here to most of the *gentes* in Europe. If the Franks take their enviable ferocity from their Trojan origins, then presumably most of the *gentes* of Europe do, too. It is difficult to understand why this would pose a threat to a king of French lineage. Furthermore, the attribution of Trojan origins to many of the Continental peoples helps to set the English off as a separate people. The speaker also recites a genealogy out of which come the Franks, Merovingians, and Carolingians. Louis, son of Lothar, is the last of this line. The speaker says, “Lodouico igitur defuncto, Francorum proceres regem super se statuunt Hugonem ducem, qui fuit filius Hogonis magni ducis” (“So when Louis had died, the Frankish nobles set up Duke Hugh as a king over them, who was the son of Duke Hugh the Great”). The line of Trojan origins therefore seems to end with Louis. This is confirmed by the speaker’s use of “duxerunt” in the perfect (*took* their origin), rather than “ducunt” in the present (*take* their origin). Along with the report that *many* nations of Europe find common origin in Troy, Henry of Huntingdon may be signaling his own skepticism of stories of Trojan origins and its inapplicability to contemporary Normans and Anglo-Normans. While he reports the Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis directly on the estimable authority of Bede, he reports the Norman ethnogenesis indirectly by portraying it issuing from the mouth of an unknown and unnamed man.

Henry shares much in common with his contemporaries, especially in his treatment of the *gens Anglorum* and the *gens Saxonum*, his treatment of Woden as a historical person, and his firm and explicit belief in Old Testament logic. Like Symeon of Durham, he maintains no distinction between the *gens Anglorum* and the *gens Saxonum*, writing “Gens namque Saxonum vel Anglorum” (“The race of the Saxons, or English,” II, i). This suggests that by the time Henry was writing, the received opinion held the Saxons and the Germanic English people to be relatively indistinguishable as far as ethnicity was concerned. With respect to Woden, Henry traces the lineage of Hengest and Horsa to Woden and then to *leta*, or Geata (as he names him in II, xxi), “quem dixerunt filium dei, scilicet alicuius idoli” (“who was called the son of god, that is, the son of some idol,” II, i). Henry is patently dismissive of this deification, and assures his reader that the line of descent is indeed the “patrum progenie” (“lineage of their fathers”). Henry, too, appears to historicize the genealogy of Anglo-Saxon descent. And with respect to Old Testament logic, Henry sums up the Norman invasion of 1066 and the course of English history with the sentiment, “perfecit dominator Dominus de gente

Anglorum quod diu cogitauerat" (the Lord, the ruler, brought to completion what he had long planned for the English nation").⁴⁶ Similarly, with regard to the *adventus Saxonum*, he writes that the victory of the AngloSaxons over the British was an act of God in punishment for British sin, as was the fire that soon consumed the island:

Accensus igitur manibus paganorum ignis iusta de scleribus populi Dei ultiones expeciit, non illius impar qui quondam a Chaldeis succensus Ierosolimorum menia immo edificia cuncta consumpsit.

("And so the fire that was kindled by the hands of the pagans brought about the just vengeance of God for the sins of the people, not unlike the fire once kindled by the Chaldeans which consumed the walls and all the buildings of Jerusalem," II. ii)

The sins of the British prompted God to destroy them: "Iusto itaque et patente iudicio constituit Deus exterminare gentem illam" ("As so, by a just and open judgment, God determined to put an end to that people," I, xlvii). After the fire set by the Saxons and in an intriguing echo of Orosius' description of the sack of Rome, fire from Heaven is said to ignite what the Anglo-Saxons did not.

And yet, Henry seems aware that the Normans and the Franks share differences. Henry puts a speech in William's mouth which clearly distinguishes the Normans from the French in both ancestry and bravery. After winning his famous victory at Hastings, William proceeds to deliver to his troops a rousing speech commending their lineage and bravery. He addresses the *gens Normanorum*, and says that their valor is natural to their race. He turns his mind back to the past, to his ancestor Hasting, an ancestor described by Dudo of St-Quentin. He says, "Quid potuit rex Francorum bellis proficere, cum omne gente que sunt a Lotaringia usque ad Hispaniam, contra Hasteince antecessorem nostrum" ("What could the French king, with that whole nation stretching from Lotharingia as far as Spain, accomplish in wars against our ancestor Hasting?" IV, xxix).⁴⁷ He asks them, "Nonne Rou pater meus, dux primus et auctor nostre gentis, cum patribus vestris regem Francorum Parisius, in medio regni sui, bello vicit?" ("Did not Rou my ancestor, the first duke and originator of our race, together with your ancestors, defeat the French king in battle at Paris, in the heartland of his realm?") Rou is the French for Rollo, and the siege of Paris is described by Abbo of St. Germain des Près.⁴⁸ Although Rollo was of Danish descent, and therefore of that *gens*, here he is made founder of the Norman *gens*. Nevertheless, William recognizes "antecessores nostri Daci et Norwagenses" ("our Danish and Norwegian ancestors") who previous to the Norman invasion, conquered England.

This recognition of a line of descent which Henry puts into William's mouth raises an interesting issue. Here are described two competing or distinct stories of

ethnogenesis. The first recognizes the relation of the Normans to the Danes and Norwegians who conquered England during the Age of Wulfstan, and settled earlier during the Age of Alfred. This ethnogenesis links the Normans to a Scandinavian origin. The second recognizes Rollo as founder of a *gens*, and is therefore literally an ethnogenesis. This ethnogenesis links the Normans to the Viking founder of the Norman polity in northwest France as it distinguishes the Normans from both Scandinavians and the English. The former story, which is a story of tribes, permits the establishment of common ethnogenic links between Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans: both can trace their communal ancestry to Scandinavia. The latter story, which is a story of kings, retains an essential (historical) distinction between Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans: the former traces its ancestry to Woden and Hengist and Horsa, the latter to Æneas and Rollo. The Danish ethnogenesis may have provided the formal context in which Anglo-Normans and Anglo-Saxons were able to conceive of themselves as a single people. The possible efficacy of the Danish ethnogenesis in promoting a single English identity may help to explain the eleventh-century manuscript of *Beowulf*, a poem which treats of Scandinavian origins and heroes. Perhaps these origins appealed to Anglo-Saxons, Anglo-Danes, and Anglo-Normans alike. But it was the Anglo-Norman ethnogenesis, based ultimately on models of Norman ethnogenesis current at the time, which proved the most popular. Its most effective exponent, although certainly not its first, was Geoffrey of Monmouth. Geoffrey distilled the Norman story of origins into a mythic tale of a battle between giants.

GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH

The passage of dominion from the Anglo-Saxon story of origins to the Anglo-Norman story of origins can be attributed for the most part to the influential *Historia regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth. MacDougall opines that it best represents the story of Trojan origins, and notes that it “had a marked influence in subduing the social animosities of the Breton, Anglo-Saxons, and Normans and drawing them together into a single nation.”⁴⁹ It was composed around 1136–38, and was by far the most popular and famously contentious medieval story of Trojan origins. Robert of Torigni, an early twelfth-century Norman historian, approved of the work and recommended it personally to the Englishman Henry of Huntingdon, who in turn was skeptical of it. Orderic Vitalis, the great Anglo-Norman historian in the tradition of Bede, thought the work genuine, while William of Newburgh attacked it with great vitriol, calling Geoffrey’s stories lies and falsehoods. But while the histories of Orderic and William were rarely reproduced, Geoffrey’s work exists in a phenomenal 215 manuscripts as well as numerous vernacular translations.⁵⁰ In this regard, it compares to Bede’s *HE* which is extant in approximately 167 Latin manuscripts, and which was translated into Old English by Alfred’s circle. By the evidence of manuscript dissemination alone,

Geoffrey's work seems to have captured and held the imagination of readers, even while Bede continued to provide the historical model by which the Norman and Anglo-Norman histories were shaped.

Geoffrey introduces his *Historia regum Britanniae* with the suspect claim that he received and translated "britannici sermonis librum vetustissimum" ("a most ancient book in the British language") given him by Archdeacon Walter of Oxford.⁵¹ It is this ancient book, he informs his reader, that provides the material for his history. Geoffrey thus employs the historical trope of unbroken tradition through textual authority. It is doubtful that such a book existed, but clearly the need for textual authority does. Like Bede, he opens his work with a traditional description of Britain's geographical treasures and then writes, "Postremo quinque inhabitatur populis normannis videlicet atque britannis, saxonibus, pictis, & scotis" ("Finally, five peoples inhabit [Britain], to wit the Normans and the Bretons, the Saxons, Picts, and Irish").⁵² Geoffrey anachronistically adds Normans to the ancient Bedan catalogue of *gentes*, in one swoop effectively rewriting Bede and distinguishing the Normans from the Bretons and Britons, to whom his origin story is properly directed. By doing so, Geoffrey authenticates the Normans as a *gens* who enjoy the same historical validity and antiquity as Angles, Saxons, and Irish. Geoffrey next relates that the Bretons ruled the whole of the island until displaced by Picts and Saxons because of British sin. In this claim, he appeals to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of sin and displacement, to Old Testament logic. Thus does he use the commonplaces of Anglo-Saxon historiography to frame his story of the Britons. His story of Trojan origins comes next, and Geoffrey follows the *Historia Brittonum* and later traditions fairly closely, although he introduces a number of additions.⁵³

One of Geoffrey's early additions, and one extremely important to the ethnogenesis of the Norman and Breton conquerors, conflates two traditions discussed in more detail below. It is the story of the giant, Gogmagog, who might signify the Goths. Gogmagog is a concatenation of the names Gog and Magog, the latter of whom was thought by some ethnographers to be the antediluvian ancestor of all the Goths. In Genesis 10:2, Gog is listed as a son of Japheth. And in Scriptural exegesis, as Richard K. Emmerson notes, Gog symbolizes foreign invaders. According to Revelations 20:2, Gog and Magog will be led by Satan against the New Jerusalem. This may explain the easy association throughout the early Middle Ages between Gog and the Goths, who, as described in the Alfredian *World History*, conquered Rome with no little ferocity. St. Ambrose, for example, explicitly equated Gog and Magog with the Goths in a letter to the Emperor Gratian in 377, while St. Augustine thought this association poor eschatology and identified them instead with the Getæ—who reappear as the Geats in Old English, as I discuss in my third chapter. Nevertheless, Isidore of Seville, whose great authority in such matters assured a compliant audience, reasserted and elaborated upon the relationship between the Goths and Gog and Magog. Furthermore,

Isidore declared a relation between the Scythians and the Goths.⁵⁴ Throughout the Middle Ages, Gog and Magog were associated with the Antichrist, with Islam, with the Scythians, with giants, but especially with the Gothic people.⁵⁵ And these Gothic people, as described in earlier chapters, include the Danes, Norwegians, and Geats of Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis.

Geoffrey says that when Brutus, great-grandson of Æneas and leader of the survivors of Troy, first arrives on the island, he assembles his troops to wage war against the giants then inhabiting Britain. The Trojans kill all the giants but Gogmagog. Brutus' companion and founder of Cornwall, Corineus, wrestles Gogmagog and throws him over a cliff to his death. This is no fairy tale. The tradition of historical giants can be traced to the authority of Scripture, and it is a tradition we see revived in the Old English poem *Beowulf*.⁵⁶ Before the Flood, as Genesis relates, heroic giants were plentiful in the world: "gigantes autem erant super terram in diebus illis postquam enim ingressi sunt filii Dei ad filias hominum illaeque genuerunt isti sunt potentes a saeculo viri famosi" (Gen 6:4, "Giants walked over the earth in those days and afterwards, when these sons of God resorted to the daughters of men and had children by them. Those are the heroes of the age, the famous men").⁵⁷ Cassiodorus attributed the Flood to the lustful behavior of the giants.⁵⁸ St. Augustine discussed this passage in his *City of God*, suggesting that the existence of incubi and lustful angels, fathers to the giants, was not impossible.⁵⁹ Augustine further confirms the existence of giants in the days before the Flood and afterwards. He quotes the Hebrew commentary of Baruch: "There were those renowned giants, who from the beginning were men of great stature, experts in war...they perished because they had no wisdom." Saxo Grammaticus, historian of the Danes, confirms the existence of historical giants in his history (c. 1208–1218), "That the Danish area was once cultivated by a civilization of giants is testified by the immense stones attached to ancient barrows and caves." But these stones cannot determine the precise nature of the giants: he adds cautiously, "There is too little evidence to decide whether those who contrived these works were giants who lived after the irruption of the Flood or men of preternatural strength."⁶⁰

In Old English literature, giants appear in numerous tales and poems. But because they appear in stories, they are often thought to have been figments of Anglo-Saxon fables. The *Beowulf* manuscript, Cotton Vitellius A xv, contains a prose piece which has come to be entitled, *The Wonders of the East*. There monsters fifteen feet tall are described, and dragons. In *Beowulf*, monsters abound. Grendel, for example, is called "eotan" (l. 761a), a giant, and is said to be "in Caines cynne" (ll. 107a), in the kinship of Cain. This association between Cain and the giants is not attested in the early Scriptural commentary tradition, but "must be imagined to have arisen independently in the recently Christianized Germanic context or to owe, perhaps, to some transmission of views represented in medieval haggadic commentary."⁶¹ R. E. Kase has found in the apocryphal

Book of Enoch a possible source for Grendel: "In *Beowulf*, it seems clear that whatever may be the ultimate origin of Grendel and his mother, Grendel is developed in large part as one of the notorious Old Testament giants." Grendel, as Kaske points out, "is characterized straightforwardly as a giant by epithets like *eoten* (l. 761) and *þyrs* (l. 426)."⁶² Among other things (such as a werewolf or the *ulfhednar* of berserkr tradition), perhaps Grendel invokes an antediluvian monster typical of the creatures thought to inhabit the wastelands of the far north. Saxo wrote that some of the giants who lived after the Flood "are today supposed to inhabit the rugged, inaccessible wasteland...and be endowed with transmutable bodies, so that they have the incredible power of appearing and disappearing, of being present and suddenly somewhere else."⁶³ At any rate, the defeated giant Gogmagog, progenitor of Beowulf's Geats, is a historical creature. Furthermore, insofar as there might have been an association between giants and the race of Cain, Gogmagog signifies to Geoffrey's alert Christian readers the moral state of Britain's earliest inhabitants during the third age of the world.

The coming into being of the Norman lineage, the age of giants, and the results of the Trojan dispersion were all thought to have taken place during the same historical era. Most of the giants were thought to have been wiped out in the Flood which occurred during the second age of the world. Brutus, founder of Britain in Geoffrey's tradition, lived during the third age of the world, when some giants were thought to have walked the earth, when heroes lived, and when the *gentes* of Europe were first said to be taking shape. It was during the third age of the world, according to Isidore of Seville, that Priam reigned in Troy and Abraham gave birth to Isaac.⁶⁴ Abraham, of course, is the father of a multitude of *gentes*, and this signifies that during the third age, various *gentes* came into being. As the Flood both inaugurates a new age and typifies the anger of God come upon the guilty, so Brutus might have been thought to inaugurate a new age on the island of Britain. In their defeat of Gogmagog, his Trojans represent the beginning of a chain of invasion and displacement which forms such an important element of Anglo-Saxon historiography—that is, Old Testament logic. Furthermore, that the new Britons drive off the giant also suggests typologically that the Trojan ancestors of the Normans had driven off the gigantic ancestor of the Goths as early as the third age of the world. The Norman displacement thus fulfills in historical time a displacement effected in mythical time.

Geoffrey's account recreates the context of the third age, a heroic age when giants and men of great strength, founders of races, battled against each other. Perhaps he was responding to stories current in Anglo-Saxon England, stories which made the *Beowulf* poem (or its retelling) possible. Or perhaps stories which concerned the third age were not uncommon. In any event, there is illustrated in Geoffrey's story an ancient justification for the conquest of Britain by the Normans. In this story, Brutus, progenitor of the Norman race, take the island from Gogmagog, progenitor of the AngloSaxons and Anglo-Danes. The Anglo-Saxons

are thus portrayed as a people of Gothic ancestry and conquered descendants of the conquered giant. Not only did the early Bretons wrestle Britain from the Gothic race of Cain, but they also boasted origins in the ancient city of Troy. What Geoffrey represents in his fabulous tale of Breton ethnogenesis, Norman historians recreate as actual fact. And perhaps in response, Anglo-Saxon historians reshaped their own Bedan inheritance to correspond to the generic demands of eleventh-century and twelfth-century historical writing. Their gods, for example, had become kings.

Trojan Origins

Norman origins were said to begin in Troy. In his *Æneid*, the Roman poet Virgil famously told of the origins of the Roman imperial ancestry in Troy. He built upon the poems of Homer, whose *Illiad* and *Odyssey* told the tales of ancient Greek warriors engaged in a ten-year battle at Troy and of Odysseus' frustrated but eventually successful attempts to return home. In the first century B.C., Virgil wrote of Æneas, mythic leader of the surviving Trojans, who leaves the defeated city of Troy by sea and eventually settles with his troops in Italy, there to become founder of Rome's empire. The *Æneid* is perhaps the most influential Latin story ever written, not least because it became virtually at its writing the foundation story of the Roman state. Through Virgil, the Romans came to see themselves as inheritors of Greek culture and empire. Edmond Faral continues,

L'exemple donné par Rome a été, dès le moyen age naissant, imité par les Francs, qui s'étaient mis en tête de succéder aux anciens maîtres du monde.... Les souvenirs du passé, joints au sentiments de la situation morale qu'ils étaient en train de sa tailler, les animait d'une foi ardent, d'un idéal aussi actif que l'appel des intérêts matériels. Les livres d'Orose, dernière grande autorité du monde ancien, enseignaient que la monarchie universelle, passé successivement des Assyriens aux Macédoniens, puis des Macédoniens aux Carthaginois, était enfin dévolue aux Romains. Mais en l'an 600 la succession de Rome et de l'empire d'Occident était ouverte. Le roi francs s'apprêtaient à la recueillir et déjà germait cette opinion, devenue plus tard en dogme, que la France avait hérité de la force et de la culture romains, toute comme Rome avait hérité de la force et de la culture helléniques.

(The example given by Rome was, from the birth of the Middle Ages, imitated by the Franks, who thought to succeed the ancient masters of the world.... The traces of the past, together with a consciousness of a moral situation in the process of vanishing, were animated by an ardent belief in an ideal as active as the call of material interests. The books of Orosius, the

last great authority of the ancient world, taught that universal monarchy, passed successively from the Assyrians to the Macedonians, then from the Macedonians to the Carthaginians, fell finally upon the Romans. But in the year 600, the succession of Rome and of the Western Empire was left open. The Frankish kings readied themselves to inherit it, and had already established the opinion, developed much later into dogma, that France had inherited Roman power and Roman culture, just as Rome had inherited Greek power and Greek culture.)⁶⁵

This same point is made explicitly by Rudolphus Glaber (980–1046 A.D.), for example, who traces the course of the *imperium* from the Romans to the Franks to the Carolingians.⁶⁶ The Trojan inheritance which had brought Greek *imperium* to Rome in the person of Æneas first finds application to the Franks in the seventh-century *Chronicle of Fredegar*, which appears to be the first extant expression of this particular genealogy. In Book Two, the *Chronicle* traces the genesis of the Frankish people to *Phrygas*, purportedly king of the Trojans after Priam (but whose name may be the result of a misreading of the Greek plural accusative *Phryges*, meaning Phrygians). Citing Virgil, a second author, “arrangeur de la *Chronique de Frédégaire*, un Franc certainement,...a salué en Phrygas l’ancêtre de son race” (“arranger of the *Chronicle of Fredegar*, certainly a Frank,...saluted Phrygas as the ancestor of his race”).⁶⁷ It is uncertain whether Fredegar considered these origins mythical or genuine, or whether such a distinction had any meaning to him.⁶⁸ The story of the Frank’s Trojan origins was extant as early as the seventh century.

Later accounts differ only slightly. An eighth-century version is to be found in the anonymous *Gesta regum Francorum*. Here a story of origins relates that Æneas went to Rome, while “Alii autem de principibus ejus, Priamus et Antenor, cum aliis viris de exercitu Trojanorum duodecim millia fugerunt cum navibus” (“All of his commanders, Priam and Antenor, with all the men of the Trojan army, twelve thousand strong, fled with their ships”).⁶⁹ These men come into the heart of what would later become Frankish territory. The eleventh-century monk Roricone, canon and chancellor of the church and university of Toulouse, told the same story, but embellished it substantially, concluding that the Trojans were already being called Franks when they landed in the heart of Europe.⁷⁰ In 1008, Aimoinus Floriacensis told this story in abbreviated form, once again asserting the Trojan origins of the Franks, but with the addition of the phrase “Trojan dispersion” to characterize the settlement of the Franks.⁷¹ In his verse *Historia vie Hierosolimi* of 1119, Gilo of Paris introduces his work with an allusion to Virgil, promising to tell “Inque suis Francis antiqua resurgere Troia/Coepit et edomuit Christo contraria regna” (“How Troy of old began in her own Franks to rise again, and crushed the kingdoms hostile to Christ”).⁷² A Trojan story is also told in the British *Historia Brittonum*, attributed to Nennius in the late eighth century, to

explain common Briton and Frankish origins. There Britto, grandson of Æneas, is driven from Italy for killing his father, Silvius, and founds the city of Tours before going on to found Britain.⁷³

The Frankish stories of Trojan origin are adapted to Norman history as early as the late tenth century. In the process, the historians of the Normans, a people who appear to have come exclusively from Scandinavia and who settled in north-west France (Norman" abbreviates "Northman"), attributed Trojan origins to Danes. The first Norman historian, Dudo of St. Quentin, author of *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniæ Ducum* which was commissioned around 994 and finished around 1015, portrayed Rollo, an early tenth-century Viking war leader and founder of the Norman state, as an Æneas who founds Rouen, the chief Norman city.⁷⁴ Felice Lifshitz has argued that Dudo's sense of Norman ethnogenesis is based on the paradigm set by the Hebrew *gens* in its settlement of Canaan.⁷⁵ Commentators are agreed that the ethnogenesis is based upon a textual pattern. Whether that text is Scripture or Virgil is sometimes contested. Nevertheless, Dudo alludes to Virgil and seems familiar with the Frankish tradition of Trojan origins established by Fredegar. It is Dudo's work on which many later Norman historians rely, and this metaphor which equates Rollo with Æneas appears to mark the literary onset of Norman Troy. In 1068, William of Poitiers, speaking of the omen provided by Halley's Comet, compared William the Conqueror to Agamemnon, conqueror of Troy, noting it took William only one day to conquer England, and then only a few hours, while Agamemnon had taken ten years at Troy.⁷⁶

One consequence of attributing Trojan origins to a Scandinavian people was the development of an ethnogenesis which regarded the Danes as descendants of Troy. In 1070 or 1072, the monk William of Jumièges built upon Dudo's work and provided a similar but more detailed story of origins. William, who was writing in praise of the Conqueror, takes the story of Frankish Trojan origins and applies it explicitly to the Danes. His machinations are remarkable. He writes, following Jordanes in his mid-sixth-century *Getica*, that two *populos*, peoples, of Gothic ancestry originated in the Mediterranean island of Scanzia. The first branch of the Gothic people left to conquer Scythia, and their wives were later known to history as Amazons. These Goths, William says following Augustine and Genesis, also called *Gete*, came from Japheth, son of Noah. Japheth in turn had a son called Magog, from whom the name of the Goths is derived. The etymology of Goth—"Cuius Gothica soboles, de similitudine ultime sillabe paterni nominis vocabulum trahens" ("The offshoots of these Goths, whose name derives from the last syllable of their ancestor's name...", I.ii)—is attested in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiarum*, ix, 2. The second branch of the Gothic people landed on German shores, naming the place of the landing Scanza in memory of their homeland. Jordanes had related that one half of the Goths were separated from the other when a bridge they were crossing mysteriously collapsed. But this second group was

not mentioned again by Jordanes and seems to have disappeared without a trace. William seems to have made use of this “lost” portion of Goths.⁷⁷ This second branch settled in “Dacia, que et Danamarcha” (“Dacia, also called Denmark”). These Goths become Danes. William then relates that Antenor, forced to flee from Troy, went with his troops to Denmark, and ruled there. He writes of the Trojans-cum-Dānes, “lactant enim Troianos ex sua stirpe processisse” (“They also boast that the Trojans were of their stock”).⁷⁸ One consequence of this byzantine attribution of Trojan origins to the Danes is that it makes (fictional) sense out of the paradoxical tradition (based on a misidentification of Scanzia with Scandza discussed in my second chapter) that the Goths were both a Nordic and a Greek tribe. In 1099, William of Apulia also attributed Trojan origins to the Normans in his verse history of the Normans in Sicily, A pulia, and Calabria.⁷⁹

The story of the Trojan origins of the Franks and Normans conflates with another tradition which had earlier served to distinguish between the Continental Bretons and the British Bretons, who in English are called Britons. The *Historia Brittonum* of Nennius contains a second origin story for the Franks which distinguishes their origins from the origins of the Saxons and Goths. In other words, this tradition denies attribution of Frankish origins in Troy to the Goths (specifically, Danes, and consequently, Normans). This is based on a genealogy. In section 17, one reads, “Primus homo venit ad Europam de genere Jafeth Alanus cum tribus filiis suis, quorum nomina sunt Hessitio, Armeno, Negue” (“The first man who came to Europe was Alanus, of the race of Japheth, with his three sons, whose names are Hessitio, Armenon, and Negue”).⁸⁰ The sons of Negue include the Saxons, while the Latins and the Franks derive from Hessitio. To the medieval historical imagination, this meant that from a very early age, the Saxons were divided from the Franks. Eleven generations before Alanus, Japheth, son of Noah, had borne seven sons. These included Gomer, from whom the Gauls descended, and Magog, from whom the Goths descended. Again, to the medieval historical imagination, this signified that from virtually the beginning of historical time, the family of the Goths (from whom the Danes and Saxons were thought to descend) and the family of the Gauls (from whom the Franks and Bretons were thought to descend) were distinct. This distinction was manifested, for example, in Septimania, a subkingdom of Toulouse in the south of modern-day France, which was called *Gotia* by the Carolingians, and its inhabitants *Goti*. Here, the inhabitants identified themselves as Goths, were called Goths by their Frankish neighbors, and distinguished themselves by their ancestry—along with the Burgundians, Gepids, and Lombards—from the Franks, Romans, Bretons, and Alamanni.⁸¹ Furthermore, Faral discusses an early sixth century (c. 520) *Tableau des Peuples* which records the tradition from which the author of the *Historia Brittonum* may have borrowed. In it, the Britons of the British Isles are distinguished from the Bretons of Gaul: “Il y trouvait nommés les Bretons, et il ne se doutait pas que ces Bretons n’étaient pas les Bretons de Grande-Bretagne” (“One finds there the

names of Bretons, and there is no doubt that the Bretons are not the Britons of Great Britain"). The Bretons are called there sons of Hissitio, and grouped with the Romans, Franks, and Alamanni. Armenon, the second of the three mythic brothers, is seen as the progenitor of the Goths, Visigoths, Vandals, Gepids, and Saxons.⁸² Genealogical tradition therefore seems to have insisted on a fundamental and long-standing ethnic distinction between the Franks and Bretons of France and the Saxons and Bretons of Britain.⁸³

Not all Norman histories which begin at the creation of the Norman state relay the Trojan story of origins. The Trojan overtones of Rollo's French *adventus* are quelled by Robert of Torigni in the 1130s. In Robert's redaction of (and reaction to) Dudo's history, Trojan origins are displaced by the less mythic (but no less credible) tale that Rollo, viking war leader, is happily befriended by King Æthelstan, who offers England as a home to Rollo's itinerant Danes. Rollo kindly declines, saying he must go off to Francia to become a Christian. After he is converted in 912, says Robert, Rollo—now called Robert—suppresses a Breton revolt and guarantees law and freedom to his Norman and Breton subjects. Robert was concerned to show the continuity of Normandy as a Christian region, attempting to extend Norman history back beyond the arrival of Rollo.⁸⁴ Robert also wanted to place Norman history within the Eusebian tradition of universal history, something pioneered for the Normans by Orderic Vitalis and borrowed by him from Bede. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* of c. 1123–37, Orderic relates much the same tale as Robert of Torigni in Book V, although he repeats Dudo's story of the Trojan origins of the Danes in his Book IX.⁸⁵

For the most part, histories and chronicles favorably dedicated to the history of the Normans, whether written in England or in Normandy, tell of Trojan origins. In the fourth decade of the twelfth century, a number of vernacular Norman histories were produced which again related the Trojan story. Because they were vernacular, one presumes they had wider or more popular appeal. They nevertheless maintain the notion of Norman *imperium* had by way of Trojan origins. Shopkow notes that in one scheme of history current at this time, "The natural rulers of Europe...were the descendants of the Trojans, first the Romans, then the Franks, then the Danes."⁸⁶ While not one of the more accomplished efforts at lyrical history, Geoffrey Gaimar's Anglo-Norman poem which relates the story of the English is nonetheless typical. Gaimar wrote his *L'Estoire des Engleis* between 1135 and 1140.⁸⁷ Not much is known about Gaimar, but he may have been attached to the northern Anglo-Norman baron Ralph fitz Gilbert, at the request of whose wife, Constance, he appears to have written his poems. He seems to have got hold of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*, although he relied largely upon the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Much of the poem is lost, but at the end of his poem he says he began with the story of Troy (ll. 6528–30).⁸⁸ Again the Trojan origins of the Britons are in evidence. The English, equated with the Saxons, have their lineage described relatively late in Gaimar's poem. The English are said to

come from Hengist and Horsa, of the lineage of Woden, and were called the Westsaxons, Southsaxons, Eastsaxons, and Middlesaxons.⁸⁹ Gaimar, who was probably of Norman origin, consistently refers to Hengist as “lur ancessur,” their ancestor, which sets him and his readers—presumably “us”—apart from the English, at least insofar as the English are considered of the Saxon lineage. Nevertheless, in his telling of the story of Havelock the Dane, which is the first extant tale of Havelock in any language, Gaimar takes “the opportunity to press the Danish claim” to English sovereignty, which is to say the Norman claim.⁹⁰ Gaimar’s distinctions align viking Danes and Normans against Englishmen and Saxons. This is probably because he conflated the Normans’ Viking roots with the roots of indigenous Anglo-Danes. Havelock the Dane is therefore a hero ultimately of Norman lineage. Gaimar’s story was quickly overtaken in the popular estimation by Wace’s *Roman de Brut* of 1155, a vernacular verse version of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia*.⁹¹

Longer stories which proceeded from or fictionally explored stories of Trojan origins became extremely popular among the French aristocracy in the High and Late Middle Ages—to the occasional antagonism of the Church.⁹² One of the earliest is Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie*, based on the sixth-century account of the fall of Troy by Dares Phrygius, *De Excidio Trojae Historia*, and Dictys Cretensis, *Ephemeris Bellis Trojani*. Sainte-Maure wrote his 30,000-line poem around 1160. He claimed to be the first to relate the story since a certain Cornelius translated the accounts of Dares and Dictys into Latin.⁹³ The Romances of Antiquity, cycles of French stories retelling the ancient past of which the *Roman de Troie* is one, blossomed in the twelfth century and many were devoted to the story of Troy. One of the more popular, and one based again on the story of Troy, was the mid-twelfth century *Roman d’Éneas*, “a loose adaptation and expansion [of Virgil’s *Aeneid*] that transforms Aeneas from a classical epic hero into a twelfth-century knight torn between the power of love and his social and familial duties.”⁹⁴ Later writers relied heavily on this version for their own. Faral writes, “De plus, beaucoup d’autres écrivains, sans remonter à la source elle-même, se contentèrent d’imiter Énéas et subirent ainsi indirectement l’influence du modèle primitif” (“Furthermore, many other writers, without going back to the source itself, were contented to imitate the *Éneas* and thus indirectly underwent the influence of the original model”).⁹⁵

The long-established story of Trojan origins in its various manifestations and elaborations proved a matter of incorruptible faith in France for centuries thereafter. As an example, Jean Lévesque de Burigny, an Enlightenment author who wrote *La Certitude des preuves du Christianisme* under the pseudonym Nicholas Fréret, was thrown into the Bastille in 1714 for daring to suggest that the Franks were descended not from the Trojans, but from the Germans.⁹⁶ But Trojan origins were recovered for the French and denied to the Anglo-Normans as early as the sixteenth century. Speaking of the Anglo-Normans,

the sixteenth-century jurist Guillaume Benoit insisted that they had been little more than Germanic chiefs, related to the Goths and suffering from the same inadequacies—a weakness for drinking, murder, and fathering bastard children; only later had they invented glorious (and deceitful) origins for themselves; their name, in fact, proved this was so—a Norman was “a man of the North.” And Normandy, under its Carolingian name of “Neustria,” had now returned to its rightful place in the French kingdom.⁹⁷

Trojan origins find their way into many Middle English works, including the *Brut*, composed c. 1461, which in its description of Brutus’ arrival follows Nennius closely, and in virtually everything else, including a very important battle against the giant, Gogmagog, follows Geoffrey of Monmouth.⁹⁸ In a fourteenth-century example, we see an interest in Troy famously expressed in Geoffrey Chaucer’s most celebrated poem, *Troilus and Criseyde*.

CONCLUSION

As Anglo-Saxons and Normans began to intermarry, as the languages which had for so long distinguished them evolved into a shared Middle English, and as the same stories of Trojan origins began to be told anew, the stories of ethnogenesis which formed the two kernels of tradition distinguishing one people from another grew tentatively into a single family tree. And the literature which both celebrated and addressed this newly formed community was written not for Angles, nor for Anglo-Saxons, and neither for AngloNormans, but for Englishmen. The pattern which Bede had established as fundamental to Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis was employed to present a Norman story of origins in France, and was later adapted by Geoffrey of Monmouth to describe the rightful invasion of England by the Normans and Bretons. The patterned complex of Scripture and mythic history with which Bede had justified the displacement of the Britons by the Anglo-Saxons was employed by Anglo-Normans to explain their own displacement and assimilation of the Anglo-Saxons. Troy had displaced Woden in the English imagination.

In the next chapter, I examine an early tenth-century poem which appears to me to be replete with the images and tropes of ethnic history and displacement. Like a story from Bede or Henry of Huntingdon, it relates events which occurred in the past. In this case, it is a verse history of the events at Maldon in Essex in the late summer of 991. The poem, titled *The Battle of Maldon*, corresponds in structure and image to an application of Old Testament logic to the events of the past. It maintains Wulfstan’s distinctions between Viking and settled Dane, and between Englishman and Viking which are given significance through stories of ethnogenesis. Through its participation in apocalyptic textual culture, the poem celebrates a shifting English identity.

CHAPTER SIX

Ethnogenesis and *The Battle of Maldon*

And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt. Sing unto the Lord...

—Isaiah 11:16–12:1

Through their language, images, and symbols, texts declare communities to which they are immediately relevant. Sometimes communities are declared in a fairly straightforward way through the language or script form of a text, and sometimes they are described through images. The Alfredian *World History*, for example, declares its community through images of a Germanic Christendom, and thus indicates the community on behalf of which the text spoke. Geoffrey of Monmouth made clear in his story of Gogmagog which communities his work addressed, and on behalf of which community it spoke. *Beowulf* declares a community well-versed in and presumably amenable to Scandinavian lore (whether its audience is or not). Wulfstan addressed a community composed of ethnic Anglo-Saxons and ethnic Anglo-Danes who slowly became incorporated through subjection to law into a single English people. He chastised this people for its recalcitrance, employing as a corrective, among other things, a theme of loyalty. Notably, this English people came to be ruled in 1016 by a Christian Dane, King Cnut, whose empire included Denmark and Norway.¹ The Age of Wulfstan thus generally registers a shift in communal identity which initially treats Vikings as ethnically similar peoples still importantly outside the realm of Christendom, as that is defined as an area of legal jurisdiction. And yet, as Vikings had earlier become settled Anglo-Danes, so did the waves of viking invaders of the late tenth century leave deposits of new Christians during the early eleventh century. My contention in this chapter is that the poet of *The Battle of Maldon*, writing during the Age of Wulfstan in commemoration of a battle in the Danelaw fought between Englishmen and Vikings in late Summer of 991 A.D., engages both an ethnic similarity to and a legal and religious distinction from the attacking Vikings. Like Wulfstan, he employs the theme of loyalty to invoke issues of moral decay and

social divisiveness. He appears to do so with a relatively complex set of references to the life of Moses, especially to the rebellion of the sons of Reuben and the crossing of the Red Sea. Positing a poet concerned with such biblical imagery and imbued with a sense of early eleventh-century English legal identity, I suggest that the poet may be presenting more than a battle poem to his English audience.

To some extent, *Maldon* offers a stylized narrative of actual events, but there are larger ideas or issues to which the poem's images and language point. *Maldon* represents a local historical event in verse, and its literary significance—that is its significance as a literary and a historical object—depends to a large extent on formal conditions by which Anglo-Saxon historical identity was shaped. The Anglo-Saxon sense of its historical tradition, as I have argued, combined Old Testament logic with an exclusive ethnic and legal sense of Germanic and Scandinavian identity built upon Bede's *HE*. In this chapter, I speculate on the possibility that the poet of *Maldon* engaged Old Testament imagery and the Bedan kernel of tradition as it had been modified in the Age of Wulfstan. Anglo-Saxon collective identity from Bede onward envisioned a chosen people, like Israel, scourged for their disobedience and rewarded for their loyalty. This identity was also taken up by Alfred, whose laws, for example, “invited [Anglo-Saxons] to remodel themselves in Israel's image.”² The image of a disloyal Israel also seems to make an appearance in *Maldon*, but it is complicated by the Vikings' close ethnic relation to the English. As I discussed earlier, Archbishop Wulfstan in his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* developed a moral position in response to the Vikings without recourse to ethnic differentiation, since Anglo-Danes both in and out of the Danelaw shared substantially the same ethnicity as the Vikings. My interest in this chapter lies in how the poet employs literary *topoi* about tribes and peoples in order to negotiate the difficult ethnic terrain posed by the battle at Maldon. In particular, I am looking at the image of migration and displacement as it is complicated by the ethnic relation of Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Danes to Vikings. Within the foundational pattern set by the story of Moses and the tribes of Israel can be seen an immediate historical relevance for the principal themes of the poem, loyalty and suffering. The poet may be concerned about Viking (that is Danish and Norwegian) lordship of England, and may be contemplating how the reigns of Sweign and Cnut fit the English historical pattern of invasion and displacement.

The poet of *Maldon* may have spoken more directly to the Bedan past than is usually acknowledged. The trope of a scourge of God displacing a sinful people tends, at least in Anglo-Saxon textual culture, to portray God's scourge as coming across water, water which divides one people from another. This trope forms the very foundation of the Anglo-Saxon migration myth. From Gildas to Bede to Wulfstan, as Nicholas Howe has recently pointed out, “the myth becomes a cautionary tale: God's will, as contained in history, can repeat itself, and a new migrant people can win the island from its sinful inhabitants.”³ Within the context of this myth, water, as Howe notes in respect of the Anglo-Saxon *Exodus*, is part

of “the natural force by which God enacts his will in history.” God, Howe continues, “controls the waters to shape history and dispense justice.” In the Anglo-Saxon *Exodus*, “The sea, which stands first as a barrier, becomes through God’s miracle a safe path.”⁴ The new rulers of England will always be a migrant people come across water. Angles, Saxons, Goths, Vikings (especially in the case of the Danelaw), and Normans all came across water to displace a sinful people.⁵ The ingress of the migrant heathen was God’s punishment for English transgression. The Britons were overwhelmed by the Anglo-Saxons, who were in turn Christianized and settled. The Anglo-Saxons were overwhelmed by the Vikings, who were also Christianized and then settled. As settled Danes and Anglo-Saxons, the English were overwhelmed by more Vikings. And during the reign of Cnut, many of these new viking arrivals were also Christianized and began to settle. In the midst of this process, *Maldon* was written.

At a very basic level, aside from independent confirmation from a certain type of authority (a charter, chronicle, etc.), there is no way to discern whether a poem’s representation of an event is factual or fictional. To some extent, either we believe the account in *Maldon* or we do not (we have no independent confirmation of most of the details offered by the poem). And yet, *Maldon*’s realistic portrayal is nevertheless stylized, since realism is a manner of telling a story which only mimics reality, but does not necessarily reproduce it.⁶ *Maldon*’s apparent authenticity may be an affect of style and not of correspondence (it may sound accurate without actually being so). In 1936, J.R.R. Tolkien famously wrote in this regard of critics of *Beowulf*. He worried that *Beowulf* was being perceived as “an historical document.” And, although he noted that the historian’s search is a perfectly legitimate one, he asked, “why should we approach this, or indeed any other poem, mainly as a historical document?”⁷ Much of the historical perspective offered by poems such as *Maldon* or *The Battle of Brunanburh*, for example, need not be considered isolated from literary currents or from more formal stylistic influence. Stylistic devices may themselves be meaningful, so that the choice of an historical style speaks to larger issues of memory and cultural authenticity. Graham Caie suggests that *Brunanburh*, for example, may “reflect a growing sense of nationality, a need to have roots and to cast a nostalgic glance at a period that never existed.” During the Alfredian period, Caie continues, “it was becoming increasingly popular to cultivate a sense of Anglo-Danish community and find a continuity from the initial Saxon invasions.”⁸ This longing for a national past is contextualized within Scriptural *topoi*: *Brunanburh* “raises this victory [over the Welsh] to the heroic stature of the immortal battles of the Old Testament narrative and heroic epic.”⁹ The form of the poem (specifically the style in which it evokes an ethnic past) testifies to its epic, nationalistic vision. Similarly, it may be that the *Maldon* poet engages the Anglo-Saxon ethnic past, the kernel of tradition established by Bede, and an Old Testament past in a context of both Scandinavian ethnicity and English law current at the time of Wulfstan. In combining these two

traditions through a heroic style, the poet comments, like Wulfstan, on the health of an antique English polity.

MALDON AND ITS CRITICS

The poem, which exists only in a fragment, portrays an English battle against viking invaders. At the outset of the fragment, we see a lone English figure, a kinsman of the great king Offa, hawking. He has just been called to battle, and so frees a hawk he may not live to care for. He leaves his horse as commanded, goes by foot, and joins the rest of the militant English gathered together under the leadership of Ealdorman Byrhtnoth. As the troops are being marshaled, a Viking shouts from the shoreline opposite that his Viking host demands tribute. He promises peace if Byrhtnoth and the English will pay it. Byrhtnoth responds with threats and abusive boasts, resolving instead to do battle with the invaders. The two armies soon face off, but they cannot engage since the tide suddenly comes in and separates them. Soon, the tide recedes slightly, the waters parting to reveal a *bricge*, or bridge. Three Englishmen are set to guard this bridge from Viking advance, and manage quite well. The Vikings, possibly seeing their victory thwarted, ask Byrhtnoth for safe passage in order fully to engage. Byrhtnoth assents. The Vikings, here called *hæpene*, or heathens, advance through waters so recently parted to battle the waiting English.

After they gain the mainland, the Vikings and the English begin to battle. Ravens wheel, eagles cry, spears fly, shields splinter, and swords spark. Weary, wounded warriors begin to fall. In the midst of this terrible and cacophonous havoc, a Viking advances on Byrhtnoth. The two face each other amid a scene of slaughter, and the Viking hurls his javelin at the earl. It pierces Byrhtnoth, who, injured, then hurls his own javelin through the neck of the Viking, killing him instantly. Byrhtnoth whirls and kills another Viking, laughs, and thanks God for a good day's work. Suddenly, a spear lances Byrhtnoth through, and the great earl is sorely wounded. An English warrior, Wulfmar, draws the deadly spear from the wound and hurls it back through the offending Viking. Yet another Viking advances on the felled Byrhtnoth that he might take the earl's corslet, rings, and sword, but with his last ounce of strength, Byrhtnoth manages to draw his sword and slay the treasure-hunting pirate. More carnage ensues and, at the height of battle, like some operatic hero, the dying Byrhtnoth raises his voice to Heaven to thank God and to ask leave to be taken into His presence. He dies with two of his warriors dead beside him. In opposition to this dead trinity of heroes, and the trinity of heroes that held the bridge, a third trinity, this one of cowards, quits the field. One takes Byrhtnoth's horse, thereby confusing part of the English force into thinking their lord in retreat. In the leaderless *mêlée* that follows, warrior after warrior urges the remainder on, including a Mercian hostage, an old man, and a ceorl. They fight

on and they die, the poem ending before the battle.¹⁰ The vast majority of the poem (or rather, of the fragment) describes the battle.

Maldon is a town near Colchester, Essex, approximately twelve miles north of the Thames inlet. It lies on the southwestern bank of the River Blackwater, in the midst of salt flats, and gives its name to a battle which took place somewhere nearby on 10 or 11 August, 991.¹¹ The battle was mentioned in a number of medieval sources, none of which seem to represent an independent tradition, including the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the *Vita Oswaldi* by Byrhtferth of Ramsay; the *Liber Eliensis*; the Ramsay Chronicle; three obituaries of Byrhtnoth from Winchester, Ely, and Ramsay; John of Worcester's *Chronicle of Chronicles*; Henry of Huntingdon's *History of the English*; and the *History of the Kings*, attributed to Symeon of Durham.¹² A poem about the battle was composed within living memory, perhaps as late as 1030 A.D., but probably within the first twenty-five years of the second millennium.¹³ The poem was incorporated, possibly by Sir Robert Cotton, into a codex known to history as BL MS. Cotton Otho A xii.¹⁴ In 1726, David Casley, an underkeeper at the Cotton Library, made a transcript of the poem before the terrible Ashburnham House fire of 1731, which destroyed the *Maldon* manuscript along with so many others. The six leaves of the Casley transcript were printed in 1726 by Thomas Hearne as an appendix to his *Johannis Confratris et Monachi Glastoniensis Chronica sive Historia de Rebus Glastoniensibus*, also called John of Glastonbury's Chronicle. Casley's transcript was subsequently lost until 1935, when Neil Ker miraculously found it bound into Oxford Bodley Rawlinson B. 203. Hearne had noted at the top of the transcript that it had been made by John Elphinson, a misascription corrected by H.L. Rogers in 1985. Hearne also noted on the transcript, "stylo Cædmoniano celebratur virtus bellica BEORHTNOTH" ("in the Caedmonian style is celebrated the warlike virtue of Beorhtnoth"). Unfortunately, Casley made little attempt to reproduce the script form of the original, so virtually every physical clue which might reveal the poem's original date of inscription is lost. The transcript has since been reproduced by Donald Scragg, the most recent and best editor of the poem.¹⁵

Critical interest the poem has been intermittent. As Roberta Frank reports, between 1726 and 1826, virtually no notice was taken of the poem. *Maldon* was rediscovered by readers in the nineteenth century through William Conybeare's modern translation in his brother's posthumous volume, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*. Between 1826 and 1906, fifteen editions of the poem were produced, nine of them German. In 1834, the poem was first titled *Maldon* by Benjamin Thorpe, whose edition was the first English edition since Hearne.¹⁶ It was reproduced by Henry Sweet in his *Anglo-Saxon Reader* in 1876, a work which has been reprinted at least eight times since 1967.¹⁷ The poem appeared in fourteen different works during the nineteenth century. In this century, it has appeared in numerous readers and editions, including John Pope's *Seven Old English Poems*, Frederic C. Cassidy and Richard N. Ringler's *Bright's Old English Grammar and*

Reader, and Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson's *A Guide to Old English*.¹⁸ *Maldon* is commonly considered exemplary of Old English heroic poetry.

Three major debates have surrounded *Maldon*. The first is probably the most enduring: whether it is fiction or history, imagined or real. Scragg explains that the argument turns entirely on the poem's verisimilitude—on its imitation or mimesis. For example, like Hearne, Conybeare thought *Maldon* “an historical poem celebrating the warlike exploits and death of Byrhtnoth.”¹⁹ Since Conybeare, the poem's historical veracity has been affirmed by such eminent scholars as Sir Frank Stenton, Peter Hunter Blair, H.R. Loyn, and Eric John. Edward B. Irving, Jr., called *Maldon* “almost a news story” with a “powerful sense of verisimilitude,” ultimately claiming it to be a “fragment of medieval journalism.”²⁰ Scragg writes,

Recently, however, comments have become more circumspect, reflecting the fact that the burden of the not inconsiderable body of literary criticism of the poem which has been published during the last thirty years has been the poet's distance from historical accuracy. There is, after all, a good case to be made for the poem being a work of fiction. As has often been observed, the speeches and much of the incident in the poem are ascribable to the poet's art.²¹

He is careful to remind his reader, though, that “this does not mean that the poet necessarily invented all the incidents of his poem.” Consensus since Scragg's judicious essay seems to be that the question—fact or fiction?—unfairly characterizes the combination of both fact and fiction in the poem.

The second major debate surrounding the poem, and one implicit in the third debate, concerns the date of its composition. It was obviously written after 10 or 11 August 991. Otherwise, there is very little about the poem which confesses its origins, with the possible exceptions of the use of *eorl* for *ealdorman* and the first element of Byrhtnoth's name, *Byrht*. John McKinnell argued in 1975 that *eorl* was used as a title for non-Danes only after the reign of Cnut, and he therefore dates the poem after 1016, and probably closer to 1021. In 1983, Cecily Clark reviewed McKinnell's evidence and concluded that the poem was written in the second decade of the second millennium “as part of the literary movement which produced Archbishop Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (composed in 1014)...,”²² In 1993, Scragg added to the available evidence by calling attention to the form of *bryht*, spelled *beorht* “in the ninth century and for much of the tenth, but in the latter part of the tenth *byrht* (or *birht*) becomes the norm.” The form metathesizes in the eleventh century to yield *bryht* or *briht*. The frequency of *byrht* in *Maldon* and the absence of the metathesized version leads Scragg to reject McKinnell's dating and to suggest more broadly an earlier date of composition between 1000 and 1016.²³

But it is also possible that the poet was an old man conditioned by habit and time to use an earlier form of *byrht*.²⁴ Secondly, a marked tendency towards

metathesis at the end of the tenth century ultimately results from palatal umlaut, for which there is evidence in the early tenth century as well.²⁵ In other words, this phenomenon cannot be limited to a single generation of speakers. Thirdly, Scragg must assume a form's immediate adoption by scribes trained to speak and spell otherwise, and thus to assume that the name *Byrhtnoth* is subject to synchronic phonological leveling. But names do not register phonological shifts or phonological leveling as immediately as more common, open-class words. Fourthly, the name appears in a transcribed poem, which demands we account both for possible spelling regularization and for possible stylistic interference: the poet may have written and spelled purposefully in an archaic style. The poem itself is archaic, reproducing images and formulae common to an ancient poetic tradition.²⁶ Most importantly in this respect, we cannot ignore the fact that we are reading a poem edited from a transcript. It is possible, therefore, that Casely regularized the spelling. This is suggested by the fact that Hearne, who had access to the original manuscript, recorded from it the name "Beorhtnoth," not "Byrhtnoth." The phonological evidence is therefore insufficient to date the poem without a margin of error of at least a generation. Scragg's phonological rejection of a later date is therefore compromised.

Scragg's dating depends, he says, upon what he believes to be "the poet's underlying artistic purpose and...his message." To this end, Scragg insists that *Maldon* would be "a much less successful poem if it is not contemporary with the battle." (Ought one to assume that it was a successful poem?) By way of illustration, Scragg compares *Maldon* to Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*, originally prompted by a *Times* editorial, and concludes that the message and meaning of *Maldon*, "Honour the dead, they died well," must, like the message of Tennyson's poem, be a timely one.²⁷ Scragg's dating therefore depends a great deal on his interpretation of the meaning of the poem, implying poetic success depends ultimately on its contemporaneity. At issue, then, are questions of style (especially realism) and of interpretation. The reason for a poem's success (or lack of it) is always a tricky business to establish, and contemporaneity is not always an obvious asset. For example, Homer's *Iliad*; the Old English *Judith*, *Beowulf*, and *The Fight at Finnsburg*; Shakespeare's *Henry V*; Stephen Crane's "War is Kind"; John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields"; Henry Reed's "Lessons of the War"; and Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved* all suggest that in literature which relates an experience of war, contemporaneity is incompatible with the attractive wisdom of long reflection. Scragg's argument, like my own, demonstrates that critical evaluations of the poem's date of composition often depend heavily on what one claims to be the poem's meaning. Since the evidence permits, I tend to favor a later date and to put the poem's composition roughly contemporary with Manuscript I of Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi* (Cotton Nero A i), after the accession of Cnut in 1016, and probably late into the first quarter of the eleventh century.²⁸

The third debate surrounding the poem, and the one to which this chapter contributes, concerns meanings of *Maldon*. Conybeare called *Maldon* “an historical poem,” and thought it typical “of the attempts of our Saxon writers to paint the pomp and circumstance of war.”²⁹ Dorothy Whitelock saw in it simply the expression of *comitatus* loyalty. Michael Cherniss commended the poem for “its heroic spirit” and its display of *comitatus* loyalty. Stanley Greenfield and Daniel Calder thought *Maldon* one of the “historical pieces” which displayed “the heroic code embodied in the old Germanic *comitatus* as described by Tacitus.” Kevin Crossley-Holland wrote, “Byrhtwold’s simple and dignified and deeply moving words are rightly regarded as the supreme statement of the Germanic heroic code.” In 1993, Scragg wrote, “The theme of this poem, as most critics agree, is loyalty. It is loyalty which every element of the organization and imagery of the poem expresses.” Again, in the next year Earl Anderson declared, “Anglo-Saxonists agree almost universally that *Maldon* is a poem about loyalty in contrast with cowardice on the battlefield.”³⁰ No reasonable reader disputes that the poem portrays loyalty.

Yet, the larger significance of the poem is often construed from how a critic thinks loyalty, which is clearly addressed in the poem, relates to the poem’s imagined audience. For example, some critics ask why a poem which explores loyalty should be relevant to an Anglo-Saxon audience during or shortly after Æthelred’s reign. Niles, who wrote that *Maldon* certainly portrays loyalty, also wrote compellingly that *Maldon* is “an attempt to conceptualize major social issues relating to Æthelred’s reign and to resolve them, or at least hang them in suspension, in the form of a story.”³¹ Edward I. Condren similarly contends that *Maldon* emblemized the notion that “Æthelred was a king in his trappings, not in his deeds.” *Maldon* in these readings constitutes a veiled comment on the political situation at the time of its composition or dissemination, assuming a relatively early date. Æthelred’s ineffectual rule is described by Simon Keynes in his study of the historical background of the battle. Keynes has suggested similarly but more specifically that the poem may have been composed as a local response to Archbishop Sigeric’s policy of rendering tribute to the Vikings.³² Or, put more generally, as S.A.J. Bradley writes, “Byrhtnoth testifies to his oneness with his people, with his land, with his lord the king; he witnesses to his Christian faith in defiance of heathendom and, dying, commends his soul to God.” He concludes that *Maldon* integrates “heroics with the motives of Church, Crown, and country.”³³ In these cases, *Maldon* is read as a portrait of loyalty which through its contrast with events contemporary with the battle, makes a timely commentary. My position is that the poem’s portrait of loyalty makes a timely commentary with respect to events contemporary with the poem’s later composition.

Some critics see *Maldon* as significant of larger issues of more than contemporary political or social import. In these cases, the portrait of loyalty is thought to have theological or philosophical significance. For example, John Hill

sees the poem as extending “a Christian transvaluation of retainer loyalty from a secular to a transcendental plane.”³⁴ “Transcendental plane” suggests that retainer loyalty is extended a universal significance. To some degree, my own argument extends Hill’s by suggesting that this significance rests in the juridical order which rests upon loyalty. The poem’s emphasis on contracts, on what men will do in return for payment or keep, suggests that expectations of loyalty to secular and ecclesiastical power binds (versus *lysan*, l. 37b) a community. Dolores Wickworth Frese writes that *Maldon* is “transmuting the heightened sense of particular historical incident into something transcendently heroic and universal.” A.N.Doane, who compares *Maldon* to the *Song of Roland*, calling it England’s only *chanson de geste*, writes that *Maldon*

has as its purpose, or motivating force, an explication of larger issues than the literal ones that exercise the heroes of the poem. The issues central to the poem are those of social order and its relation to individual and general salvation within the divine plan.³⁵

To those who see *Maldon* as an exclusively secular expression of loyalty, Doane responds that in Anglo-Saxon England, “nothing was only secular.” Morton W. Bloomfield writes that even in a poem as seemingly secular as *Maldon*, critics must attempt to understand the purpose of the poem in relation to Christianity, since Christianity so heavily influenced the environment in which poetry was written and read. And as it stands, *Maldon* is a written poem, and its Christian textual culture must therefore be considered. As Bradley pointed out, Byrhtnoth’s defiance is against heathendom, which, as I argued in earlier chapters, is set against a legal sense of identity. The Christian line of argument, perhaps stemming ultimately from Bernard Huppé’s casual suggestion that *Maldon* may have been part of an effort to canonize Byrhtnoth, was characterized by Scragg as improbable, since a saint would not likely show *ofermod*, or pride.³⁶ Scragg is certainly right here. But we do not want to throw the baby out with the bathwater: Christian resonances need not be wholly dismissed simply because Byrhtnoth was no saint. More importantly, this poem isn’t only about Byrhtnoth.

In fact, a number of critics have suggested that the poem conveys a Scriptural significance beyond its record of local events. This is not to disregard the topic of loyalty, nor to deny the historicity of the events, nor to deny mythic references, but to inquire into the poem’s and the poet’s participation in a larger textual culture. It is to ask how the poem participates in the web of texts which informs its composition and shapes its meanings. One of the areas of textual culture with which the poem participates concerns the pattern of Scriptural history and the formation of English identity. Old Testament logic was a lesson drawn from texts, a meaning reckoned from scrutinizing sacred areas of textual culture. Patrick Wormald notes, “Any further lapse could well mean that the English would finally

suffer what they had themselves inflicted on the Britons. Obedience to the new English government was the price of survival.”³⁷ In this passage, Wormald connects all the issues that are at stake in the poem. Accordingly, the Vikings, seen to threaten the right of the Christian English to rule England, remind them, through their very presence, of a communal moral transgression—of an English inability to apply their own laws properly and widely. Obedience and loyalty to the law and offices of state are the keys to English salvation, since only through loyalty to God’s plan is salvation possible, and only through loyalty to one’s betters is government possible. As both Wormald and Nicholas Howe have described it, this all takes place within the idiom of Scripture, and against the ever-present image of Israel, the Chosen People. In this respect, Doane writes of *Maldon* that

the story is built on two intersecting lines, the historical line, recounting the actual or imagined events as they took place on the ground, in time, and a vertical typological line referring Byrhtnoth’s actions to an eternal pattern of Christian action, in which God directly intervenes.³⁸

This is not to say that *Maldon* is a religious poem, only that an Anglo-Saxon poem, if it is to offer a meaning beyond itself, must draw its relevance from common idiom and standard poetic imagery. The poet’s imagery must be commonly understood. This imagery may derive from a number of sources, but one of the more potent was Scripture.

Furthermore, loyalty is not the poem’s only legible theme. At a thematic level, loyalty is coupled with a critically unacknowledged theme of suffering. These themes in combination may point to a Scriptural and historical idiom behind the poem’s images. *Maldon*, like Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi*, may result from the poet’s warning that disloyalty and irreligion cause communal suffering. Equally, the poet may be reminding a royal or monastic audience that each is obliged to suffer, either as a soldier who faces death or as a monk who faces heathendom. The poet establishes the theme of communal English suffering early in the poem with his phrase “yrhþo ge olian” (l. 6b), suffer cowardice. The phrase is then echoed after the cowardly trinity, Godrich, Godwin, and Godwig, flee from the battlefield. Offa, the poet tells us, had earlier warned Byrhtnoth that certain boasters “þolian noldon” (l. 201b), would not suffer, when it came time. “þolian” does not simply connote endurance, but a troublesome suffering venturing on torture. Its use in *Maldon* might well carry this larger and more severe connotation, one consistent with the migration myth and the suffering of the English people under the Vikings.

The term “þolian” appears only three times in the whole of the Old English Gospels, and then only in the Synoptics, each time in exactly the same context. In Matthew 16:21,

Sy an he ongan swutelian hys leorningnihtum þat he wolde faran to hierusalem and fela þinga þolian fram ylðrum and bocerum and ealdormannum þæra sacerda and beon ofslegen. [*sic*] and þy þryddan dæge arisan.

(From that time Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day.)³⁹

Mark 8:31, in his version of the same passage, relates that Christ will “fela þinga þolian,w (suffer many things), and Luke relates in 24:46 that it is written that “crist þolian” (Christ would suffer) and on the third day would rise from the dead. This same passage is echoed in the Old English *Andreas* (l. 1414). As is clear to anyone familiar with the story of the Gospels, Christ’s suffering is not mere endurance: He is tortured horribly. The *Maldon* poet may invoke with *polian* Christ’s sustained torture for the sins of others. In the *Heptateuch*, in Exodus 10:7, the sole incidence of the term in the Pentateuch, God delivers ten plagues upon the people of Egypt. After Moses delivers word of the eighth to Pharaoh, Pharaoh’s *þegns* turn to him and mournfully ask, “Hu lange sceolan we olian as yrm u?” (How much longer shall we suffer this misery?) Again, to anyone familiar with the abject horror of the ten plagues, the suffering undergone by the Egyptians is not mere endurance: it is suffering undergone for the folly of its king, especially for his sustained disobedience to God’s will.

The point at which *Maldon* seems to engage Scriptural echo most acutely is in this possibly thematic use of *polian*. Wulfstan, in his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, uses the same term to describe the viking invasions which plagued England during the period *Maldon* was composed:

Oft twegen sæmen, o e þry hwilum, drifa þa drafte cristenra manna fram sæ to sæ, ut þruh þas þeode, geweleda togædere, us eallum to woroldscame, gif we on eornost ænige cuþon ariht understandan; ac ealne þæne bysmor þe we oft þolia we gylða mid weo scipe þam þe us senda : we him gylða singallice, and hy us hyna dæghwamlice.

(Often two pirates, or sometimes three, will drive herds of Christian men out through this people from sea to sea, huddle them together as a public shame to us all, if we could in earnest properly feel any. But all the disgrace we often suffer we repay with honor to those who bring shame on us. We pay them continually, and they humiliate us daily.)⁴⁰

Wulfstan goes on to describe the arson, pillage, murder, and rape the English undergo at the hands of these pirates, who are nevertheless receiving English gold. But he is also sure to describe why the English are suffering this terror: it is because they are sinful, disloyal to God's law—and Wulfstan specifically cites Gildas as an authority, thus portraying the viking terror as historically consistent with the governing paradigm of the island's narrated past. Sin brings on national suffering. Wulfstan enumerates the sins of the English and calls on them to repent, lest they face the potential loss of sovereignty the Britons suffered in Gildas' narrative. Although the viking pirates are destroying town and country, they are also messengers of God's displeasure with the English. *Polian* operates within a semantic range that grounds the Anglo-Saxon mythographic tradition, including the viking raids and the Viking attack in *Maldon*, in the Old Testament.

Old English poetry generally demonstrates this sense of the term. In *Judith*, for example, the Hebrew warriors are “þa e hwile/ær el eodigra edwit þoledon,/ hæ endra hosp...” (“those who until that time suffered the abuse of foreigners, the insult of heathens...,” ll. 214a–216a). The Israelites here undergo that which the English undergo in Wulfstan's sermon, the terrifying abuse of heathen foreigners. Outside the mythographic pattern, but sustaining a sense of intense suffering is the *Dream of the Rood*, in which we are told that once Christ harrows Hell, he releases those that had “þær bryne þolodan” (“there suffered the fires of Hell,” l. 149b). Similarly in *Beowulf*, the sword with which Beowulf first strikes at Grendel's mother is said to have struck through the helmets of those who subsequently “olode” (“suffered,” l. 1525b). The Danes find themselves with “gepolianne” (“deep sorrow,” l. 1419a) upon finding their beloved Aeschere's severed head. In the Old English *Exodus*, the Tribe of Judah upon its release from bondage is said “lange þolian” (“to no longer suffer,” l. 323) the humiliation of Egyptian captivity. After Helen finds the true cross in *Elene*, she is inspired by God to preach in Hebrew, a part of which recitation of Scriptural lore includes the rebellion of Satan. As Helen says, “Þas he in erm um sceal, ealra fula ful, fah trowian, þeowned þolian” (“thus he in misery, full of all that is foul, the enemy confederate, shall suffer slavery,” l. 767). In these cases as well, the sense of the term *polian* is powerfully evocative of deep, torturous distress.

The term “þolian,” which notably appears more often in *Maldon* than in the whole of the Gospels, invokes Christ's three days of torture, the indescribable suffering undergone in Hell, and the profound pain of losing loved ones. With respect to Wulfstan, *polian* evokes the suffering which the English undergo at Viking hands. The poet's term declares that *polian* is what Offa wants his men to undergo, what the troops at Maldon are meant to subjugate themselves to, and what is ultimately expected of these Englishmen. But most importantly to *Maldon* in this regard, the term connotes the brutal shame of foreign subjugation, a shame necessitated by an unrepentant English population whose militant emissaries Byrhtnoth and his troops are. As the kernel of tradition demands, Byrhtnoth and

his troops must suffer for the sins of all Englishmen, just as his troops must suffer for Byrhtnoth's pride. Suffering for sin is part and parcel of the medieval Christian experience, and thematically, the *Maldon* poet appears to invoke a portion of that experience.

Byrhtnoth, after all, is not the only character in this poem, and certainly not the most eloquent; and *ofermod*, as George Clark has reminded readers, is only one of many qualities shown during the battle. Monumentalizing this poem, declaring it a classic statement of an ideal, emphasizes the ends of loyalty, rather than its means. In other words, the eventual heroism of the English soldiers takes pride of place in the criticism over long suffering. As Isidore of Seville succinctly put it in his discussion of war and triumph, "Nam turpis est dolo quaesita victoria."⁴¹ In heroism, specifically in the memorialization of a hero like Byrhtnoth, we see a kind of victory. There is a kind of victory, too, in the speeches of the retainers. And yet the battle at Maldon was not a victory. If the converse of Isidore's statement is true, ought we then to ask after sorrow in this battle? The manuscript context may suggest as much. Mary Richards has shown that *Maldon* was likely collected in Cotton Otho A. xii with the *Life* and *Translation* of St. Elphege. Elphege, Anslem of Canterbury says, "as truly suffered for justice as St. John did for truth." Elphege suffered, but not as much for Christ as he did on behalf of his people.⁴² Suffering is demanded of both the militant and the monastic reader. *Maldon* illustrates that good Christians and good soldiers must suffer, without wavering in their commitment, the profoundest of terrors.

THE POEM AS A TYPOLOGICAL EVENT

While there is much to recommend *Maldon* to a historian's eye, there are incidents in the poem which seem to suggest that the poet may be invoking a larger historico-religious typology. As Caie suggested with respect to *Brunanburh*, *Maldon* may be cast in terms of the heroic battles of the Old Testament. The first reader of the events at Maldon to write of their typological connection with Scripture and Israel was Byrhtferth of Ramsay in his *Vita Oswaldi*, or the *Life of St. Oswald*. He wrote the work between 997 and 1005, six to fourteen years after the battle itself, and possibly before the composition of the poem. The text is uniquely preserved in BL Cotton Nero E. i, vol. I. It is interesting to note that in contradiction to the account of the poem, Byrhtferth records that when Byrhtnoth fell, "et reliqui fugerunt" ("those remaining fled").⁴³ This suggests that in this regard (and perhaps more) the poem does not agree with a relatively nonfictional and earlier source, further complicating its relation to "actual events." Byrhtferth describes the battle at Maldon and then writes directly,

Talis enim olim comminatio ludeis promissa est, quam nostrates tunc et nunc sustinebant et sustinent. Dicet enim comminans propheta: 'Pro eo quod

non audistis verba mea, ecce ego mittam et assumam uniuersas cognationes aquilonis (ait Dominus) et adducam eas super terram istam, et super habitatores eius, et super omnes nationes que in circuitu eius sunt, et interficiam illos.'

(A threat was once issued to the Jews, similar to what our people, then and now, were and are enduring. For the prophet Jeremiah said, reproachfully, 'Because (said the Lord) you have not heard my words, behold I will send and take all the kindreds of the north, and I will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all the nations that are round about it, and I will destroy them.')

⁴⁴

Here, Byrhtferth, our first and only attested reader of the events at Maldon, makes both a historical and a Scriptural comparison: like the Jews, so are our people suffering from invaders from the north. His explicit typological comparison between the events at Maldon and Scriptural history is also causal: because the English have not heeded God's word, the viking northmen are brought by God as scourges. This reading by Byrhtferth provokes a consideration of the events in *Maldon* as indicative of this larger historicoreligious pattern. In other words, if Byrhtferth saw the events typologically, perhaps the *Maldon* poet or his audience did, too. Michael Lapidge explains, "Byrhtferth was primarily interested in typology" and he saw "Byrhtnoth as the type of Moses (Exodus 17:12)."⁴⁵ It is the larger ramifications of Byrhtferth's typological reading (though not his association of Byrhtnoth with Moses, with which I do not agree), of an insistence on the role of typology in the larger meaning (the *largius accipi*, as it were) of Anglo-Saxon history, which I would like to suggest may have engaged the *Maldon* poet.

The image of Israel in this regard needs clarification. The typology to which the *Maldon* poet might refer is one which designates two branches of the Jewish people. The first branch was thought to comprise the religious Jews of the Diaspora, the southern Hebrews after their dispersion; the second branch was thought to comprise the irreligious northern Hebrews of Judah. In part, this view was based on Nehemiah 13 and its exclusion of the Moabites and Ammonites.⁴⁶ Isaiah 11 contemplates the eventual return of both branches, branches which Jeremiah calls Israel and "Her faithless sister Judah" (Jer 3:8). Jeremiah, too, envisions a return of both branches: "In those days the House of Judah will unite with the House of Israel; together they will come from the land of the North to the land I gave your ancestors for a heritage" (Jer 3:18). Allen Godbey explains this image: "People of Judah and Benjamin were all restored following the triumph of Cyrus. Descendants of other tribes were not included in the recorded return [to the community]. They were to be restored at some time in the far future."⁴⁷ The restoration would follow an invasion from the north in which cities would be

destroyed, battle would be waged, and the cowardly would flee (Jer 4). God promises, “Now I will bring on you all a nation from afar, House of Israel” (Jer 5: 15) to kill most, but not all, of her disloyal men. The typology here concerns people of the same *ethnie*, but not of the same religion, scourging the Israelites, advancing on them from the north. Also illustrating the bifurcative tradition is an account of the rebellion of the sons of Reuben, or the Hebrew tribe of Reuben, in the Book of Numbers, many of whom God destroys in the desert (Num 16–18). The Anglo-Saxon poem *Exodus* speaks within this tradition and notes of Reuben:

He his ealdordom
synnum aswefede, þæt he si or for
on leofes last. Him on leodsceare
frumbearnes riht freobro or o þah,
ead and æ elo; he wæs gearu swa þeah. (335b–339b)

(He had spoiled his sovereignty by his sins, so he went further back, in the wake of the favorite. His own brother had taken over from him the firstborn’s right in the nation, his wealth and his nobility; nevertheless, he was at the ready.)⁴⁸

While all the tribes are considered a single, chosen people, some are marked off by their material and political success as favorites of God. In other words, the typology illustrates that only one portion of an *ethnie* is truly chosen. Perhaps correlatively, employing an image of a chosen people in which one tribe (*gens*) enjoys supremacy over the whole *ethnie*, the poet of *Maldon* saw an ironic parallel with Englishmen and the triumphant Scandinavian Vikings. As Goths, they were part of the Anglo-Saxon ethnic pedigree.

Byrhtferth’s typology draws the parallel that just as scourges were brought from the north against the Jews for their failure to follow God’s word, so are the Vikings brought from the north against the English at Maldon for failing to heed God’s message. In other words, like Jeremiah’s Israelites, the English are a people loyal to God who have become disloyal. Did the poet of *Maldon* construct his verse history in such a way as to offer his readers that very same connection? Possibly. Byrhtnoth is characterized in the poem as leading a Christian army against heathen Vikings: he declares that “Feallan sceolon/hæþene æt hilde” (Fallen shall be the heathen in battle; ll. 54b–55a). The opposition between Christian and heathen in this poem has not gone unnoticed. Paul Szarmach, for example, has placed *Maldon* within the tradition of the *Ludwigslied*, which treats of “Vikings and Christians in conflict.”⁴⁹ One of the central features of this tradition is the understanding that, in consonance with Old Testament logic, the heathen bring war in response to the sins of a people. Simon Keynes writes that the Viking invasions of the 990s “would certainly have been regarded by many as an expression of divine displeasure with

the English people...."⁵⁰ The poet may be expressing to a sin-ridden Anglo-Saxon community Byrhtferth's message that because English sin and disloyalty had brought the Vikings as a scourge of God, good and loyal men will continue to die.

Furthermore, in *Maldon*, the Scripturally based Anglo-Saxon myth of migration and displacement may be invoked through the image of water, with the Vikings possibly portrayed as the new dominant tribe of Englishmen—another branch of the Anglo-Scandinavian family, as it were, come in chastisement. Aside from efforts to locate the site of the actual battle near water, the symbolic role of water in *Maldon* has yet to be carefully analyzed. It seems to play a very important but misunderstood part. Condren suggests that perhaps the image of "an island, and a ford connecting it to the mainland may have suggested to the poet an excellent way of representing symbolically some point he wished his poem to convey."⁵¹ But what point? Critics who favor the historical approach tend to see such symbolism as irrelevant. Is it possible that to a Christian reader alert to the participation of *Maldon* in a historical typology, this image may suggest more than an interesting and fortuitous geographical anomaly? Might it also suggest the parting of the Red Sea in the Anglo-Saxon *Exodus*? If so, to what extent does the poet engage *Exodus*, and does he do so ironically or directly? The poem's literary relation to *Exodus*, to a longer Anglo-Saxon mythographic tradition involving *Exodus*, or to any other text for that matter, is partially impeded by Scragg's claim that "there is no evidence that the poet drew directly upon a written source."⁵² And yet the archaic style of the poem, its meter, and its formulae show that the poet was composing within an established literary tradition. If we fail to recognize the poem's engagement with its own textual culture, its combination of images of a local battle with images from a longestablished poetic tradition, we deny the poem its semiotic involvement in the conceptual world of which it was undoubtedly a part. In fact, I would argue that *Maldon* engages not so much Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* as it does Gildas and Bede and Alfred and Wulfstan and Byrhtferth, all of whom advanced an Anglo-Saxon identity according to the typological reckoning of Old Testament logic.

There are also several incidental moments in the poem which suggest the poet's interest in the symbols of Christian culture. For example, when the Vikings advance through the waters, it is at Byrhtnoth's invocation of God (l. 94b). Morton W. Bloomfield has therefore argued that this invocation suggests Byrhtnoth now puts the battle in God's hands.⁵³ God is present in this poem, even if He isn't always heard above the din. Also incidental but no less possibly Christian are the persistent numerical images. There are a number of trinities: three men defend a causeway, Byrhtnoth suffers three wounds, three brothers (whose names all begin with the element *God*) flee in contrast to three who fall. Only twelve men are named in the poem—an apostolic number and the number of tribes of Israel. In the poem *Exodus*, twelve battalions are established (l. 224). These trinities and twelves are dismissed out of hand by Niles as "favorite numbers of traditional

narratives”—whatever “traditional narratives” might be to an Anglo-Saxon poet of the eleventh century.⁵⁴ Trinities play a very large part in Christian typology, as do twelves. Twelve is considered a mystical number in both Christian and Jewish tradition.⁵⁵ The Christian God exists in a trinity, the Holy Family is a trinity, and Christ was crucified among a trinity with a trinity of nails, for example. Unidentified “traditional narratives” rather than Christian texts do not seem to me to contribute much to rendering relevant significance to these numbers. And if the numbers are accidental, then arguably everything is accidental, and meaning fails. In any case, neither avenue has been explored beyond its remarking. Another example of Christian resonance is Byrhtnoth’s *ofermod* which is the defining characteristic of a rebellious Satan in the Old English *Genesis*, a Scriptural figure whose rebellious disloyalty followed on his place as God’s favorite. Here is another indication that Scripture may contribute to our understanding of the poet’s images. Trinities and twelves, invocations of God, echoes of Satanic disloyalty: all these seem to point beyond the literal to what Doane has suggested might be “some coherent statement more abstract and universal than the mere reportage of a single engagement.”⁵⁶ Whether or not such a reading ought to be privileged over others is a different question entirely. For the moment, it only remains to suggest that Byrhtferth’s typology might be confirmed in some of the images of the poem.

In this vein, one of the central images of the poem is Byrhtnoth’s commendation of his soul to God moments before his death. It is essential to note that the poem, at one of its most terrible and important moments, portrays a man at prayer. Byrhtnoth’s prayer is his third invocation of God in the poem, and these three invocations parallel three distinct movements of prayer, as they are explained by the poet Cynewulf.⁵⁷ In *Christ II*, lines 771b–77a, Cynewulf writes,

Uton us beorgan þa,
penden we on eorðan eard weardien;
utan us to fæder freoþa wilnian,
biddan bearn godes ond þone bli an gæst
þæt he us gescilde wi sceapan wæpnum,
laþra lygesearwum, se us lif forgeaf,
leomu, lic ond gæst

(Let us then protect ourselves, as long as we defend a habitation on earth; let us beseech the father for defenses, pray to the son of God and the compassionate spirit that he who granted us life, limbs, body and spirit may shield us against the weapons of the injurer, the stratagems of enemies.)⁵⁸

Here Cynewulf suggests the benefits of supplication to God for the protection of a homeland. The God of this prayer—the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is unified in His various activities as a God of national defense. Prayer and

supplication can result in national safety. Byrhtnoth invokes God three times. The first time (l. 94b), he declares that God alone knows who will rule the battlefield. This is the God of wisdom, the all-knowing Spirit. The second time (l. 148b), Byrhtnoth thanks God for the slaughter he is able to perpetrate. This is the God of righteous battle, the Old Testament Father who gives strength and victory to His chosen people. The third time (ll. 173a– 180b), Byrhtnoth thanks God for “ealra þæra wynna þe ic on worulde gebad” (“all the joy which I have had on this earth”), and asks God that his soul be taken into the realm of Heaven, into God’s power, and not to Hell. This is the compassionate Son of Cynewulf’s prayer whose crucifixion allowed Christians to gain this salvation. Thus Byrhtnoth invokes the Holy Spirit, the Father, and the Son, the three persons of the Christian trinity, before he dies. Immediately upon finishing his request, “þa hine heowon, hæ ene scealcas” (“then they hewed him, the heathen soldiers,” l. 181). The term *hæ ene* in this line emphasizes the opposition between Byrhtnoth’s Christianity and the Viking’s paganism. Byrhtnoth’s prayer in the midst of battle implicitly ties the activity on this battlefield to its ultimate religious consequences. Byrhtnoth’s speech, his words which thank God and commend his soul to Him, act as much as his sword to protect the integrity of his soul and the integrity of his homeland. This, too, contextualizes the battle within a tradition of spiritual warfare.

THE NORTHEY HYPOTHESIS AND THE LITERAL ACTIVITY OF THE WATER

But the typology ends at the water, so to speak, since the activity of the battle at the Pante is so often the subject of historically oriented critical interest in the poem—almost to the exclusion of any other aspect of the poem. If the poet indeed offers Byrhtnoth both literally and typologically, then it may be possible that the tidal activity and the ingress of the Vikings is intended as a commentary on the moral state of the English and the role the Danish and Norwegian Vikings play as eventual rulers of the English people. The literal activity of the water notwithstanding, the figurative or typological activity of the water is a literary device. It serves to advance the plot, and, as Condren suggested, to imply some larger meaning. To some extent, Byrhtnoth would not have exhibited *ofermod* had it not been for the tactical advantage the English enjoyed due to the incoming tides. But to the larger purpose, I am proposing that the waters of the poem can be read as a type of the Red Sea.

On a literal level, the presence of water is essential to the progress of the poem’s narrative and imagery. It initially provides the English with an advantage over the Vikings by permitting them to engage the enemy on a limited scale. Its impediment to full battle also prompts Byrhtnoth’s *ofermod*. This aspect of the water recalls the first part of Howe’s statement quoted above, “The sea, which stands first as a barrier, becomes through God’s miracle a safe path.” In the case of *Maldon*, the

parted water is a safe path for the Vikings. I would like first to examine the barrier water, then to propose a reading of God's safe path. The water in *Maldon* is as much a barrier to battle as it is a barrier to eventual English defeat. But for all its importance to the course of the Battle of Maldon, no Anglo-Saxon or Medieval source reveals the actual site of the battle. Neither does any source of information on the historical battle, the relatively detailed *Life of St. Oswald* included, mention water near the battle site. Only the poem mentions water: it appears to have flowed from the poet's imagination. And yet the coincident tides of the Maldon shore and the *Maldon* poem, like the identification by Grundtvig in 1817 of the Danish king Chochiliacus with Hygelac in *Beowulf*, sometimes efface the literary with the historical.⁵⁹

In fact, it is the literal, geographical characteristics of the poem's receding water that have directed historians and critics since E.D.Laborde in 1925 to place the battle where they do. Having found that outside the town of Maldon in Essex, the waters of Southey creek, which flow east-southeast along the southern shore of Northey Island, there recede to reveal a passable causeway, most critics are intent on declaring the poem's parted waters nothing but a historical fact. Earl Anderson, for example, claimed simply of the poet, "Certainly he understood the topography of the Essex shore."⁶⁰ To a very large extent, critics point to Maldon today, to the numerous published pictures of the exposed isthmus, and explain the progress of the actual battle.⁶¹ The received hypothesis is that the Vikings landed on Northey Island across from the mainland, and, when the man-made isthmus appeared at low tide, made their way across. In the middle of this causeway they met three English troops who kept them entirely at bay. Seeing their chances for victory abating, the Vikings coaxed Byrhtnoth to allow them safe passage to the mainland.

A literal description of tidal activity does not invalidate typological interpretation (as Byrhtferth's comment testifies). Nevertheless, the course of the water in the poem appears to be slightly inconsistent with the historical explanation.⁶² These inconsistencies argue that the image is primarily a literary one, and thus of the poet's making. For one, there are tactical considerations which prove problematic. First, the geography of the site suggests it holds a defensive advantage for those on the island.⁶³ But the Vikings threatened attack, not defense. While a good offense is built upon a good defense, the site makes access to the mainland, and thus offense, difficult. And if the Vikings eventually wanted access to the mainland to make good their threat, why did they not beach on the mainland? One explanation is that the defensive benefits of landing on a small island off target with such narrow access to the mainland outweighed any offensive obstacles. This would presume that the Vikings came in a small force, and therefore sought a defensible position—which few historians presume. So, if a small force of Vikings wanted to maintain a defensive position, why did they then ask to be admitted *en masse* to the mainland? Surely Byrhtnoth's superior numbers would prevail in the open. And if they came in a force larger than Byrhtnoth's,

then initial and limited access to the mainland foolishly denied them the benefit of their superior numbers.⁶⁴ Northey was no place for a superior army threatening battle. Cyril Hart also sees a strong argument against the Northey hypothesis on strategic grounds:

Were the Danes to take their ships upstream [along the Blackwater] to Northey, the English had only to blockade the estuary as King Alfred had done at the mouth of Southampton Water in 896, and the Danish fleet was trapped. If on the other hand the Danes were encamped at Mersea Island... it is difficult to see what purpose it would have served for their army, having left their ships favourably placed for a quick getaway, to proceed to bottle itself up in Northey, where they were very vulnerable to a siege, with few local provisions and little or no fresh water."⁶⁵

The essential and troubling question of fresh water and provisions aside, the question of retreat is an important one. It is difficult to understand why the Vikings would forego a defensive position on an island itself ultimately indefensible from siege, and step to the mainland where tidal activity might cut off a retreat to their ships. The tidal activity, as it was anathema to advance, was anathema to safe retreat. Laborde, in first establishing the Northey hypothesis, noted that the site formerly considered authentic—the bend of the River Blackwater near the town of Heybridge and first proposed by E.A. Freeman—would not “provide a means of safe retreat,” which is one of “the elementary rules of war.”⁶⁶ This was an important consideration in his rejection of the Heybridge site. And yet unsafe retreat also compromises Northey, because of the tidal activity there. If the Vikings expected that prolonged low tide would grant them continued access to Northey in case of a retreat, then the same low tide would grant the same access to Englishmen in pursuit—and an island, with access for an enemy in pursuit, is not a tactically sound place to retreat. No, if a poor line of retreat compromised Heybridge, it compromises Northey.

A third tactical consideration concerns another elementary rule of war: one should never fight uphill, and never on poorer footing than one's enemy. (Cromwell used this to his advantage, sometimes drawing Royal troops into mud and mire as he feigned retreat.) But according to a reconstruction of the site by George and Susan Petty, access via the exposed causeway required the Viking line to climb (in full battle gear) a roughly sixty-five degree incline of wet peat moss and mud at the mainland end.⁶⁷ Unless we imagine that battle was engaged with Victorian civility in set lines following a polite invitation past any inconvenient geographical obstacles, this would be, to say the least, a tactically unsound footing. Given the fact that at the outset of the poem the Vikings seem to envision access to the mainland up this steep and soggy incline, their position

on Northey, or in a wet trench beneath enemy forces arrayed along a bluff five or six feet above the water line, begins to make less and less tactical sense.

In light of all the difficulty Northey offers the historian, Hart has recently proposed a site near Freeman's original proposal at a place on the Fulbridge Road, called Fulbridge in 1185, and which may be a reflex of the poem's *bricg* (ll. 74b, 78b, 85a). Hart notes that at the far end of the Fulbridge causeway, "was one of the several local estates owned by Byrhtnoth's wife, Æfflæd." This is territory demonstrably known to Byrhtnoth. Furthermore, "If the two confronting armies were at opposite ends of that portion of the causeway crossing the Blackwater, one of them would have to allow passage to the other at low tide, if they were to do battle."⁶⁸ Hart points out that the land opposite both Northey and Fulbridge was marshy and ill suited for fighting. There is no question in his mind that both Byrhtnoth and Olaf Tryggvason, the Viking leader, would have had to redeploy their troops after seeking a less marshy site. Although the poem makes no mention of this, neither do any historical sources. It is pure speculation, born again of a desire to make history out of poetry. Perhaps, in spite of all military sense, the battle did take place on the shore opposite Northey Island. Or, perhaps Condren is prudent to suggest that the site of the battle may have been chosen by the poet in order to convey something of larger significance. Or perhaps the poet was uncertain about the battlefield and was purposefully ambiguous.

The confusion engendered by attempting a reconstruction of the historical events from the poem's evidence is further illustrated by attending to the progress of the water. Consider some of the evidence for the current Northey Island hypothesis. First, the poet tells us that the Viking messenger "stod on stæ e" ("stood on a shore," l. 23a). The Viking messenger stood on one bank, Byrhtnoth stood opposite, and they shouted at each other over the din of eighty to one hundred and twenty yards of roaring seawater.⁶⁹ In this scenario, the two seem to be initially separated by water. But mid-way through the poem, water suddenly divides the armies: at line 65, "pær com flowende flod æfter ebban" ("there came flowing the ebbing tide"). According to the poem, until this point water had not yet divided the two positions, which nevertheless appear to be divided at the outset of the poem. The causeway does not appear until after line 65, when high tide comes in, and withdraws to reveal a bridge.⁷⁰ But they are said forty-two lines earlier to have stood on opposite shores. How can the Viking and Byrhtnoth have shouted at each other across water that does not appear until later in the poem? If the Northey hypothesis is taken at face value, and the evidence of the poem at line 65 consulted literally, it seems that the tide comes in twice before it goes out once. Unless one is prepared to propose that the ebb tide can come in upon itself, or to fill in details which the poet does not include at the risk of rewriting the poem, some dry land must have originally separated Byrhtnoth and the Viking. If this is the case, then the defensive benefit of Northey Island at the outset of the poem is moot. Although the quirks of Northey geography seem generally suited to the incidents of the

poem, neither do the precise chain of events described in the poem fit the reconstructed site perfectly, nor is the site unique for its causeway.

Given the possibility that a poem, even one which deals with a historical battle operates on a different evidential basis than a historical account, it seems likely that the historical accuracy of the Northey hypothesis will necessarily be compromised by the larger issues the poem engages. While it may have a geographical source, the course of the water is part and parcel of a poem, a literary image engaging Anglo-Saxon textual culture, and one essential to the literary progress of the battle. Considered as a symbol, the image of water dividing to reveal dry land might have been understood as more than a problematic description of a geographical curiosity. At the same time, like the parallel between Maldon and Scripture offered in Byrhtferth's *Life of St. Oswald*, this image may also invoke an image from Scripture, one which would certainly have been understood *as a historical event*. This is the image of the Red Sea withdrawing to provide passage to the tribes of Israel.

THE TYPOLOGY OF THE WATER AND ITS THEMATIC CONSEQUENCES

It may be objected that what happens to the tide in *Maldon* does not precisely resemble what happens to the waters in Exodus. One tends to imagine the Red Sea crossing as one of the great anomalies of nature. But evidence suggests that the Israelite crossing was considered miraculous not as anomalous natural event, but for its timing; tides move water and expose land in Egypt, too. In fact, a dry path has been observed to open nearby the Red Sea.⁷¹ The description of the waters in *Maldon* is constructed in similar terms as the image in *Exodus*. Both are descriptions of natural tidal activity, and neither suggest natural anomalies. In *Maldon*, "Se flod ut gewat" (l. 72a), the water goes out, and a "bricge" or "ford" (ll. 78b and 88a), a causeway, appears. In the Old English *Heptateuch*, a vernacular translation of the first seven books of the Latin Bible, the water is said to be affected by winds—"micelne wind ealle a niht" ("a great wind all that night")—and "æt wæter wear on twa todæled, & Iæg an drige stræt urh a sæ" (that water became separated in two, and there lay a dry street through the sea).⁷² As in *Maldon*, a dry path appears due to the regular activity of nature. In *Maldon*, a bridge appears; in the *Heptateuch*, a street appears. In the Old English poem *Exodus*, a paraphrase of the Scriptural book, "brim is areafod, sand sæcir spaw" ("the brine is separated, the sea-ebbing spewed sand," l. 291). Again, the ebbing tide produces a causeway over which an army crosses. In the *Heptateuch*, in *Exodus*, and in *Maldon*, the sea follows its natural tidal course, ebbing to reveal a dry path. Anglo-Saxon textual culture reveals that the parting of the Red Sea was imagined by them not necessarily as some miraculous anomaly of nature, but as a fortuitous (and thereby miraculous) occurrence which was in keeping with regular tidal activity.

Conversely, regular tidal activity might be considered miraculous if it was also fortuitous.

In his vocabulary, the poet further recommends a more associative reading of the water. Howe remarks, “Christian methods of reading such as typology instilled a habit of arguing for correspondence, rather than difference,” and such correspondence as *Maldon* exhibits with both the *Heptateuch* and *Exodus* in this regard permit a typological reading. The words the poet chooses to describe the tidal activity intimate that the course of the water is in God’s hands. The first word in *Maldon* in this regard is *flod*. Howe says that the poet of *Exodus* “reserves *flod* to denote God’s intervention in earthly life.” Once again, in line 65 of *Maldon*, “þær com flowende flod æfter ebban” (“there came flowing the ebbing waters”). *Flod* “names the natural force by which God enacts his will in history.” Furthermore, the term “is so strongly endowed with a sense of divine agency and sacred history as to diminish, even obscure, its literal meaning.”⁷³ Habakkuk 3:8, recorded in a vernacular Mercian Hymn, reads, “Dryhten, o e in flodum hatheortnis in, o e in sae onræs in?” (“Lord, is your anger blazing in the waters, or your fury in the sea?”).⁷⁴ This Christian understanding of God’s agency in human affairs may inform the cultural relevance of the poet’s watery image—as it informed the activity of the water in Bede’s account of the martyrdom of St. Alban. It may be that the poet is appealing to Byrhtferth’s typological urge and to the literary connotations of *flod*.

A second word is *wicing*. In line 96b–97a of *Maldon*, the Vikings were “for watere ne murnon/wicinga werod” (“unconcerned about the water, the pirate [viking] host”). In practical terms, this would seem to be an unnecessary verse, lending little information, since the poet declares six lines earlier that the Vikings make it across the saltings safely. But in emphasizing the Viking’s lack of concern with the water, the poet does not necessarily describe their skills in reckoning tides, nor their possible knowledge of the Essex shore, but instead may suggest the watery fate of others who crossed on such a tidal causeway long before *Maldon*. In this regard, Howe describes the appearance of *wicing* in *Exodus* to describe the lost tribe of Reuben:

From this vision of the sea as the setting of the exodus follows the poet’s portrayal of the Israelites as sailors. This is, in turn, developed most vividly in two unique compounds: *sæwicing* (l. 333) and *saelaf* (l. 585). The first, in naming the sons of Reuben, seems unlikely to have the evident meaning of ‘sea-pirates.’ Beyond remarking that this is one of the earliest OE uses of *wicing*, editors are content to gloss it as ‘sailor’ or ‘sea rover.’ Such a meaning seems quite inappropriate in context: ‘sæwicingas ofer sealtne mersc’ (l. 333). Can it really mean ‘sailors’ if this people is said to cross not open sea but a salt marsh?⁷⁵

In *Exodus*, the Israelite tribe of Reuben which crosses a salt flat is called *wicingas*, while in *Maldon* the Norse pirates, who also pass over a salt flat, are similarly called *wicingas*. The correspondence of Vikings walking unmolested by water over salt flats at Maldon with the viking tribe of Reuben walking unmolested over salt flats suggests a possible relation of the poem to *Exodus*. But in *Exodus*, not *all* the Israelites are called Vikings, only a single tribe, the tribe of Reuben. The tribe of Simeon, for example, crosses later and are called *folc* (l. 340b). This indicates that the Vikings were considered by the poet, just as Reuben is considered with respect to Israel, an irreligious part of the English people, a heathen portion of a single people. If indeed the poet believed in a unified English and Anglo-Danish identity, then this allusion to the tribe of Reuben declares his conception of the Viking place in English historical identity. Perhaps as Reuben fought against the Israelites, so are the Vikings to be understood in their fight against Byrhtnoth—irreligious brother chiding sinful brother.

The poet gives this tentative parallel between the Vikings and the tribe of Reuben further strength with a third term, *gerymed*. Here, the poet seems to indicate both the possible restoration of the chosen people—its religious and irreligious branches represented in the English and the Vikings, respectively—while it recalls Jeremiah's promised punishment. The lines which relate the opening of the causeway appear to link *Maldon* to *Exodus* and to the restoration of the entire chosen people. Lines 91–95 read in full,

ongan ceallian þa ofer cald wæter
 Byrhtelmes bearn (beornas gehlyston):
 'Nu eow is gerymed: ga ricense to us guman to
 guþe. God ana wat
 hwa þære wælstowe wealdan mote.'

("then he, Byrhtelm's son, began to call [to the Vikings] over cold water (the warriors listened), 'Now [a path] is cleared away for you: come quickly against us, men to war. God alone knows who might rule this slaughterplace.'")

The first thing to notice is that the two peoples appear to understand each other, they speak the same language. As Bede had shown in his *HE*, a people is defined in part by its common language. Since the Vikings and the English seem to speak the same language, perhaps they are to be understood as ethnically the same people. A second thing to notice is that the subjunctive *gerymed*, a path is opened, suggests an active agent who clears the path specifically *ewow*, for you, for the Vikings. *Ryman* is a term used only twice in the sermons of Archbishop Wulfstan, whose career was contemporary with the composition of the poem. In "Gifts of the Holy Spirit," Wulfstan speaks about those things which come from the devil

and warns, “Antecristes þrælas þe his weg ryma, þeah hy swa ne wenan.” (The thralls of the Antichrist open his path for you, nevertheless do not despair of them.”).⁷⁶ Here the term suggests other-worldly intervention in human affairs. In a sermon called “God’s Threat to Sinning Israel,” Wulfstan relates to his audience what God in Leviticus “þus spæc on geardagum to Moyse” (“thus spoke in days of yore to Moses”). He recites most of chapter 26 in Latin, then, for those who “ne cunne þæt Lenden understandan” (“are unable to understand Latin”), relates God’s promise to Israel concerning the people when they obey His commandments. But, Wulfstan warns (Lev 26:14–46), if Israel does not obey, “gif ge þonne fram me hwyrfa eowre heortan ñ lara lara ñ laga laga mine forgyrna o e oferhogia, þonne sceal eow sona weaxan to hearne wædl ñ wawa, sacu ñ wracu, here ñ hunger” (“if you then incline your heart from me, and neglect or despise my precepts and rules, then shall you soon flourish in harm, poverty and grief, war and punishment, invaders and hunger”). Furthermore, Wulfstan reports, “ge beo gesealde feondum to gewearde, þa eow geryma ñ swyþe geswenca” (“you will be delivered into subjection by enemies, and they will clear away and greatly oppress you”).⁷⁷

The English on the bridge are *gerymed*, cleared away, and greatly oppressed as a disloyal, but religious Israel is cleared away by a vengeful God in Wulfstan’s sermon. Thus does the poet echo the textual culture of his time. At this point in the poem, the Vikings then carry their shields, not *through* the water, but “ofer scir wæter” (“over shining water,” l. 98a). Like so many nations before them, the Vikings have now arrived over water.

In regard to the Viking crossing, a fourth term used in the poem, *ofermod*, lends strength to the currency of the Scripturally derived pattern. *Ofermod* is often described as a haughty insubordination, consistent with Satan’s rebellion as described in the Old English *Genesis*. But there is another instance of the term in the Anglo-Saxon corpus which has not been fully pursued in relation to *Maldon*. It is especially pertinent because it concerns a song, or poem of war. In Deuteronomy 31–32, Moses approaches the end of his life. God comes to him and tells him to write down the words of a song as a warning to his people. When Israel forgets itself, God says, and disasters overcome the nation, this song will remind them of their covenant. After Moses finishes writing the Books of the Law, he gathers the elders of the tribes and the scribes of Israel and recites his song, sometimes called “The Song of Moses.” Here is textual precedent for a martial song or poem being used as a prophetic warning, as an incitement to moral behavior. George Philip Krapp suggested in his edition of the Junius manuscript that part of the poem *Exodus* might have been inspired by the Song of Moses.⁷⁸ Perhaps it also inspires the poet of *Maldon*.

In one portion of the song, God has seen the sins of His people and angrily declares that He shall bring fire, disaster, plague, fever, terror, and destruction upon them. But, He warns the enemies of the Israelites not to think that they

accomplished this under their own power: “ $\neg$ for hyra feonda yrr e ic wandode, e læs e hyra fynd *ofermodegodon*, $\neg$ cwædon: Ure hand is heah $\neg$ ne worhte Drihten as ingc” (32:27, “And I halted the error of their enemies, lest their enemies grow *proud* and say, ‘Our hand is high and God did not effect this thing,’” my emphasis). “How else could one man rout a thousand, how could two put ten thousand to flight?” God asks. Or, one might chime in, how could three Englishmen rout so many Vikings? In this instance, *ofermod* describes the indisposition to recognize God’s part in a battle, an insubordination to the rightful arbiter of events, as Bloomfield argued. And yet, Byrhtnoth himself declares to the reader, “God ana wat/hwa þære wælstowe wealdan mote” (“God alone knows who will rule this slaughter-place,” ll. 94b–95b). The literal meaning of the line is clear enough. God, not tactics and arms, is the ultimate arbiter of battle. (But the poet also artfully employs the word “wæl,” which connotes a flood or river, and “weal,” which is a homophone for “weall,” a rampart, as well as for “wealh,” a foreigner or stranger. In this line can be read subtly compounded some of the elements at play in the poem’s artful portrait of the battle. Perhaps the line homophonically intimates that the Vikings, strangers to the English, are not drowned as they cross between the waters, which ought to have formed a wall or rampart.) If an Anglo-Saxon audience were attuned to the resonances of Anglo-Saxon textual culture, this moment in the poem ought to be indication of the uncertainty of their own future if they do not repent of their sins. It also ought to indicate that the Vikings are no Egyptians, but a northern branch of the same *ethnie* threatening to displace the English in the Promised Land.

TO WHAT END THESE ECHOES?

As Byrhtferth indicated in his *Life of St Oswald*, Scriptural *topoi* surround the events at Maldon in the imaginations of some Anglo-Saxons, and served as a lens through which they approached the moral and social currency of the poem’s imagery. Wulfstan’s sermons help to contextualize the event because they allow us insight into how some Anglo-Saxons envisioned the legal, ethnic, and religious role the Vikings were playing in the larger canvas of English history. Wulfstan reminds his audience that the English, like Israel, will be punished for transgression. Similarly, *Maldon* reminds its audience that “wæs seo tid cumen/ þæt þær fæge men feallan sceoldan” (“the time had come when men doomed to death should fall there,” ll. 104b–105), that the sin of the English dooms men to a violent death. And yet, during the battle itself, at its bleakest moment, Byrhtnoth’s men resolve to fulfill their promise of loyalty. They “God bædon/þæt hi moston gewrecan hyra winedrihten/and on hyra feondum fyl gewyrca” (“bade God that they might avenge their wine-lord and wreak slaughter upon their enemy,” 262b–264). This loyalty is certainly directed at Byrhtnoth, their wine-lord, but in a typological sense, it is indicative of the loyalty Englishmen owe to

their covenant with an Old Testament God, the God of Leviticus, the One who, in the context of Old Testament logic, brought them into England to displace the sinful Britons. In this light, protestations of loyalty to Byrhtnoth do nothing to avert the disaster that awaits the troops.

At the point in the poem when “þær com flowende flod æfter ebban” (literally “there came a flowtiding, waters which follow the ebb,” l. 65), the armies are for the first time in the poem completely separated. No voice connects them. With the appearance of a path, the poet suggests that God, through His intervention in nature marked in the term *flod*, has granted the Vikings and the English a testing ground. At this point in the poem, the situation is such that a few brave Englishmen are able to hold off the entire Viking assault. One might be permitted to think that God’s intervention had given an English elite a fortunate opportunity—here through a geographic advantage—to hold off an entire Viking force. But according to a typological reading, it was also God who brought on the Viking force. Thus it appears that the English are to be both tested and scourged, their mettle set against the northern scourge of God come into the promised land in long ships. After some hard fighting, but with the same quality that brought Satan to Hell—Tolkien’s enigmatic but presumptuous *ofermod* (l. 89b)—Byrhtnoth invites the Vikings to the mainland. In doing so, he presumes upon the natural course of God’s justice, but all in keeping with his fate.⁷⁹

God has both ordained the tides and provided the causeway, a break in the waters which resonates with echoes of *Exodus*, as a battlefield or testing ground. By taking advantage of this limited arena ultimately given them by God, the English are able to sustain a full frontal assault with only three troops. Forsaking his position in response to the bidding of the Vikings, Byrhtnoth yields English ground. In inviting the Vikings to cross, Byrhtnoth engages Scriptural precedent and hopes that, like the Egyptians, the Vikings would be swallowed up by the onrushing tide. But in *Maldon*, the Vikings do not play Egyptians to the English Israelites. Byrhtnoth is not a good reader. The Vikings are of the same *ethnie* as the English; they are, like the Anglo-Danes, of Scandinavian ancestry—they, too, are typological Hebrews. *Maldon* is no parallel of *Exodus*. Instead, the *Maldon* poet engages an AngloSaxon cultural myth built upon the Israelite migration in *Exodus* as well as a notion of return in which the entire people will come together in the promised land. That the Vikings are not swallowed by the sea is no surprise, since in the larger Anglo-Saxon tradition of penitential scourges which Wulfstan elucidates, the sinful English are to be reprimanded by God through the viking scourge, the Vikings will be Christianized and settle, and Cnut will take the throne as a new English king. Here, after the ingress of the Vikings, the newly constituted English rise to prominence, as England did after Cnut took the throne of both England and Denmark to rule the Scandinavian world. Furthermore, Byrhtnoth has presumed to challenge God’s role in the affair—to set himself against God, in the words of Leviticus—by disloyally dismissing the tactical gift God had given

his people, a causeway on which to sustain the fierce Viking attack. Byrhtnoth and his people have turned against God and will suffer for it, but it takes the Scriptural parallel, the Anglo-Saxon migration myth and Old Testament logic to make this point.

The interlace of local and Scriptural history is thus rendered immediately significant by its participation in textual culture. Martin Irvine has argued that with the verse history *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* poems, for example, the “nostalgic form of the poetry domesticates the past.” The very lexicon and imagery, he says, “had become newly encoded with a contemporary political, racial, and national value, capable of expressing a cultural ideology.”⁸⁰ One might observe that the lexical and imagistic treatment of the ingress of the Vikings into England in *Maldon* demands Englishmen ruminate on their moral and legal right to territorial sovereignty. In casting this ingress in terms reminiscent of the Exodus image of parted waters and the return of the northern tribes, the poet prompts urgent consideration into what role the Vikings are ultimately to play within the English tradition of rightful invasion and displacement. Such a question is likely to have been at issue in the opening decades of the eleventh century. *Maldon* thus expresses a political, racial, and national ideology consistent with the received notion of ethnogenesis current in the Age of Wulfstan.

Finally, like the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes before them, the Danes will claim sovereignty in Britain through Cnut in 1016. Their success arises, according to this line of argument, from the inability of the suffering English to reform their sinful and illegal ways, from the peaceful restoration of the unsettled portions of the Scandinavian nations to England, and ultimately from the dispensation of God. Like the “Song of Moses,” *Maldon* in this guise stands as a poetic reminder to sinners. It graphically describes the consequences of sin upon an unrepentant but chosen nation. And, it warns that insubordination or disloyalty to God and to one’s betters is bound to result in suffering. More importantly, it justifies the Danish regency in terms of an ancient kernel of tradition. The interplay of Christianity and war and of prayer and battle indicates the poem’s participation in the historical patterns of Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis. Whether *Maldon* takes its meaning from its historical context, its social context, or its religious context, the poem must be allowed to take its meaning also from the aesthetic and textual context which presupposes its very articulation. And within that context, within the textual traditions which animate the poem’s images and lexicon, *Maldon* offers its Anglo-Saxon readers stylized moments of the interaction between the words of Bedan history and the deeds of local men. Thus, local English culture and history, specifically the men of Essex in their battle with invading Vikings, can be identified with the larger processes of redemptive Christian history traditional to Anglo-Saxon England, specifically a brave but sinful chosen people punished by God for its disloyalty. The *Maldon* poet thus engages the kernel of ethnographic

tradition first established by Bede in order to speak obliquely to the recurrent and timely patterns of Anglo-Saxon identity in a newly constituted English voice.

Notes

CHAPTER ONE: VOICES OF RACE

1. In Nicholas Brooks, *Anglo-Saxon Myths: State and Church, 400–1066* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), p. 3.
2. I am using *race* to describe a group whose boundaries are relatively difficult to cross, and *ethnicity* to describe a group with relatively porous boundaries. See Michael Banton, *Racial Theories*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 208–209. I am indebted to Banton's work. See also Walker Conner, "A Nation Is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group, Is a..." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1 (1978):377–400; Virginia Tilley, "The terms of the debate: untangling language about ethnicity and ethnic movements," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20 (1997):497–522.
3. See, for example, John M. Hill, *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic: Reconstructing Lordship in Early English Literature* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000).
4. David Wallace, ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. xvii and p. xv. Wallace promises that each reader "may thus customize his or her own personal literary history" (p. xviii), as if history were a menu of accessories with which to dress oneself. His approach has recently been critiqued by Allen J. Frantzen, "By the Numbers: Anglo-Saxon Scholarship at the Century's End," *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 472–495. The same issue is raised by Peter Richardson with respect to a 1992 survey of literary studies edited by Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn, *Redrawing the Boundaries*: "Anglo-Saxon literature seems to be slipping off the literary radar.... Anne Middleton's essay on medieval studies notwithstanding, this six-hundred-page volume lacks a single reference to Anglo-Saxon literature or its critics"; review of *The Cultural World of Beowulf* (John Hill) in *Modern Philology* 94.2 (1996):207–14, at 207–08.
5. This issue is raised and discussed by Herbert Pilch and Hildegard Tristram, *Altenglische Literatur* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1979), p. 11. A cultural consistency is assumed, for example, by C.L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), chapter 2, entitled "On the Continuity of English Poetry," a reprinted response to R.W. Chambers' famous 1932 essay, "On the Continuity of English Prose." See also Stanley B. Greenfield, *The Interpretation of*

- Old English Poems* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), who addresses, but at times succumbs to, the “fallacies of homogeneity and similarity,” p. 27. For an excellent overview of the issue, see Michael Lapidge, “The Comparative Approach” in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 20–38; and Roy Liuzza, “The Return of the Repressed: Old and New Theories in Old English Literary Criticism,” in *Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings*, ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (New York: Garland, 1994), pp. 103–47.
6. Each requires a narrative that can account for change within a defined and closed system; in the cases in which I am interested, that system is defined not by national boundaries, but by a sense of race or genus. See Banton, *Racial Theories*, p. 47. See also Walker Conner, “The Nation and Its Myth,” in *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, ed. Anthony D. Smith (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 48–57.
 7. See Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: Old English, New Language, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1991), chapter 2. It is impossible to overstate the debt I owe to this work.
 8. I use the term *divination*, following Schleiermacher and Sartre, “to designate productivity in the understanding of a text”; Manfred Frank, “What Is a Literary Text and What Does It Mean to Understand It?” in *The Subject and the Text: Essays on Literary Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Andrew Bowie and trans. Helen Atkins (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 23–96, at p. 41.
 9. An important early view of a poem as an object of anthropological inquiry is available from Roland Barthes, “Drame, Poème, Roman,” *Théorie d’ensemble*, ed. Philippe Sollers (Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1968), pp. 25–40.
 10. See Banton, *Racial Theories*, chapter 2 on “Race as Lineage” for a succinct description of this model; and Frantzen, *Desire for Origins*, pp. 114–22; but especially Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 139–64.
 11. See Frantzen, *Desire for Origins*. Frantzen follows in part Edward Said’s notion of origins (p. 23). Origins are also a kind of speaking, or coming into language of an idea: see Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Art and Its Significance*, ed. Stephen David Ross (Albany: State University of New York, 1994), pp. 254–280; and Michel Foucault, “Distance, Aspect, Origine,” in Sollers, *Théorie*, pp. 11–24.
 12. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins*, p. 111. See also Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles, “Introduction: Anglo-Saxonism and Medievalism” in *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, eds. Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles (University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 1–14.
 13. Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 15; Heidegger critiques this distinction in ch. 3. See also Dorothea Frede, “The question of Being: Heidegger’s project,” *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 42–69; and Noam Chomsky, *Language and Thought* (Wakefield, RI: Moyer Bell, 1993), pp. 36–40.
 14. This is Kant’s position: Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), p. 91 §57: “...it would be absurd for us to hope that we can know more of any object than belongs

to the possible experience of it or lay claim to the least knowledge of how anything not assumed to be an object of possible experience is determined according to the constitution that it has in itself." For later responses to this, see Rudolf Bernet, "Husserl" in *A Companion to Continental Philosophy*, eds. Simon Critchley and William Schroeder (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 198–207, at pp. 198–99. But see also David Bell, *Husserl* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 168–69. Broadly speaking, this position with respect to the intellectual constitution of perception is the starting-point of critical notions of discourse and ideology.

15. This claim extends to objects of thought and to "historical" and "literary" objects; the conditions of textual experience being thereby defined by paleographical, codicological, and generic contexts. Thus one might read *Beowulf* as a tenth-century text, as addressing pride and prodigy, or as an epic, for example. While the internal logic of any given reading may be impeccable, it is the evidence on which the justification for the reading rests which constitutes the conditions of textual experience, and is, therefore, the most productive site of critique.
16. R.Fred Wacker, *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and Race: Race Relations Theory in America Before Myrdal* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1983), p. 15: "Those who thought in Lamarckian terms [Jean de Lamarck, French botanist, 1744–1829] ...referred to what today are termed national, cultural, or ethnic groups as races." See Banton, *Racial Theories*, pp. 11–12. The literature on ethnicity is vast, and more recent theorizing has to be distinguished from pre-Holocaust theories, and those from theories before World War I, and so on. On influential early European studies after World War II, see the contributions to Manfred Straka, *Handbuch der europäischen Volksgruppen* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1970); and Mihai Pop, "Problèmes généraux de l'ethnologie Européenne," in *Actes du pretnière Congrès Internationale d'ethnologie Européenne* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve, 1973), pp. 43–62. In 1971, Pop called for studies on the function and significance of historical form on ethnic identity, p. 55. Such is, in part, my purpose. See, for example, Konrad Köstlin, "Das ethnographische Paradigma und die Jahrhundertwenden," *Ethnologia Europaea* 24 (1994):5–20; and Joshua A.Fishman, *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity* (London: Routledge, 1999). A good introduction for medievalists to the pertinent literature is by William O.Frazer, "Introduction: Identities in Early Medieval Britain," in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, eds. William O.Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 1–22. On Bede, see especially Georges Tugenes, *L'image de la nation anglaise dans l'Histoire Ecclésiastique de Bède le Venerable* (Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2001), a very useful book. Tugene examines the same evidence that I examine in the next chapter. On biological and political factors at play in early medieval ethnicity, see John Moreland, "Ethnicity, Power, and the English," in Frazer, pp. 23–51; and Barbara Yorke, "Political and Ethnic Identity: A Case Study of Anglo-Saxon Practice," in Frazer, pp. 70–89; as well as Ian Wood, "Conclusion" in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. Walter Pohl with Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 297–303, esp. p. 299. A clear and important essay is by Lotte Hedeager, "Migration Period Europe: The Formation of a Political Mentality," in *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Frans Theuws and Janet T.Nelson (Leiden: Brill, 2000). The continuing series of which *Rituals of Power* is the eighth volume, *The Transformation of the Roman World*, series editor Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill), is of inestimable value for any

- study of early medieval ethnicity and identity. Theories of race and further reading are offered in Bernard Boxill, ed. *Race and Racism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
17. I agree with Thomas Bredehoft's assessment that "Anglo-Saxon texts are constructed for (and, indeed, help to construct) ideal Anglo-Saxon readers; by learning to accommodate our reading practices to those imagined for these texts' ideal readers, we can learn something about what Anglo-Saxon writers expected of their readers." In his *Textual Histories: Readings in the AngloSaxon Chronicle* (University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 9.
 18. J.R.R. Tolkien, "The Monsters and the Critics" in *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, ed. Daniel Donoghue (New York: Norton, 2002), pp. 103–30, at p. 105. See in this respect Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 98–129.
 19. Ross Poole, *Nation and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 11; and Hedeager, "Migration Period Europe," pp. 17–18. European Union definitions of ethnic communities include cultural traditions, and literature counts among these: see Article 2 of *Status der Föderalistischen Union europäischer Volksgruppen*, cited in Straka, *Handbuch*, p. 5. On the legal representation of communities in the Middle Ages, see Otto Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, trans. F.W. Maitland (1900; Bristol: Thoemmes, 1996); for an important view of such socio-economic relations in Old English literature, see Jos Bazelmans, "Beyond Power. Ceremonial Exchanges in Beowulf," in Theuvs and Nelson, *Rituals of Power*, pp. 311–75.
 20. See Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry*, CSASE 18 (Cambridge University Press, 1996).
 21. Allen J. Frantzen, "The Diverse Nature of Old English Poetry," *Companion to Old English Poetry*, eds. Henk Aertsen and Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), pp. 1–17, at p. 3. Morton Bloomfield described the application of Old English literary uniformity to Anglo-Saxon culture as the fallacy of homogeneity; see above. But see John D. Niles, *Homo Narrans: the Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 77, who prescribes poetry "to gain a feel for the system of values" of Anglo-Saxon England.
 22. G.W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 8.
 23. *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York: Free Press, 1996), p. xii.
 24. Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, p. 9. Also Herwig Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, tr. Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 15: "[tribal] beginnings were history, though not events that could be dated and located historically."
 25. G.R. Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages* (1984; rpt. Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 68–69.
 26. Origen, *Against Celsus*, in *Ante-Nicean Fathers*, vol. 4, 5.29. Again in 5.31.
 27. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (1969; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), pp. 6–7. See Tugene, *L'image*, p. 10; Roger Ray, "Bede's *Vera Lex Historiæ*," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 1–21; and Benedicta Ward, "Miracles and History: A Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories used by Bede," in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the*

- Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Gerald Bonner (London: Society for the Preservation of Christian Knowledge, 1976), pp. 70–76.
28. HE, p.4.
 29. See Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory 350–1100* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 13; and Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, p. 137. But see Jean-Pierre Chausserie-Laprée, *L'expression narrative chez les historiens latins* (Paris: Boccard, 1969), pp. 1–7.
 30. Poems are actually a part of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. See Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, p. 72. See also Janet Thormann, "The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* Poems and the Making of the English Nation," in Frantzen and Niles, pp. 60–85.
 31. Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, tr. Peter Putnam (New York: Vintage, 1953), p. 151. Nicholas Howe, "Historicist Approaches," in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 79–100, at p. 79.
 32. A point Theodor Adorno makes in his 1967 *Prisms*; cited in J.M. Bernstein, "Introduction," *Adorno: The Culture Industry* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 19. On the culturally constitutive aspect of poetry, see Niles, *Homo Narrans*, pp. 77–79.
 33. Fred Robinson, "The Tomb of Beowulf" in *"The Tomb of Beowulf" and Other Essays on Old English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 3–19. On "culture" as a historical phenomenon independent of the texts and objects that comprise it, see Theodor Adorno, "Culture and Administration," in Bernstein, pp. 107–31, at p. 117.
 34. Both citations from Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 43.
 35. de Certeau, *History*, p. 45.
 36. Manfred Frank, *Selbstbewusstsein und Selbsterkenntnis: Essays zur analytischen Philosophie der Subjektivität* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1991), pp. 79–157. Frank offers a compelling overview and critique of philosophical positions on consciousness, subjectivity, identity, individuality, and intersubjectivity. Also, Heidegger, *Phenomenology*, pp. 125–61; and Banton, *Racial Theories*. On the self and the mind-body problem, see Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *The Self and its Brain: An Argument for Interactionism* (1977; rpt. New York: Routledge, 1995); and Dalia Judovitz, "Philosophy and Poetry: The Difference between Them in Plato and Descartes," in *Literature and the Question of Philosophy*, ed. Anthony J. Cascardi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987), pp. 26–51. One handicap in approaching these problems is the supposition inherited from Descartes that knowledge moves "from an awareness of self to knowledge of the external world," thus setting the question of self prior to the question of externals and within a discourse of intension and extension; see John Cottingham, "René Descartes," in Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa, *A Companion to Epistemology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 93–97, at p. 95; and Heidegger, *Phenomenology*, p. 123. Another consequence of the Cartesian starting point is that we imagine that whatever ethnicity is, it is always asserted from a point of view, from an internal self to which sense delivers only fragments of a more authentic reality. See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Daniel C. Dennett, *Content & Consciousness* (New York: Routledge, 1969); Jorge J.E. Gracia, *Introduction to the Problem of Individuation in the Early Middle Ages* (Catholic University of America, 1984); Michael Haren, *Medieval Thought: The Western Intellectual Tradition from Antiquity to the Thirteenth Century*, 2nd ed.

- (University of Toronto, 1985), p. 16; and, more generally, John Marenbon, *Early Medieval Philosophy (480–1150)* (New York: Routledge, 1983).
37. I should allow that *culture* is too compromised a category to be useful. I mean by it a complex of institutions, primarily schools, and their traditions of grammar, literature, history, theology, law, and so forth; see, for example, Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West*, trans. John J. Contreni (University of South Carolina Press, 1976), p. xxiv.
 38. Aristotle, however, does describe the political implications of some of Solon's poems; see *The Athenian Constitution*, ed. W.D. Ross, 2 vols. (Chicago: William Benton, 1952), 2:554–558.
 39. On evidence coming into being as history, see Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 84. On a “modern” American sense of race, see Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900–1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), who describes “the shift from a multiplicity of white races to the arrival of biracialism.” Banton argues that the idea of race in the eighteenth century was such that in comparison with modern notions of race, “there was no idea of race in the eighteenth century” (*Racial Theories*, p. 5). Allen J. Frantzen makes the point with respect to “queer” that social or cultural categories are not historically consistent; *Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from Beowulf to Angels in America* (University of Chicago Press 1998).
 40. I am distinguishing between categories that stories offer and categories that people adopt in their daily lives, discussed in detail below. Stories that govern judgments of phenomena follow generic models; this implies that genre may be one of the fundamental organizing principles of human experience. In this respect, I am especially indebted to the work of Niles, *Homo narrans*, and Richard A. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). I speak in chapter two of the Scriptural genres by which Bede perceives the history of his own people.
 41. Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. ix. My work owes its first inspiration to Howe's study, and to his generous conversation. My only qualification of Howe's statement is to stress *some* Anglo-Saxons, rather than *the* Anglo-Saxons.
 42. See D.H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 1, who cites Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 87. See also Heather, pp. 12–13, on divisions among Goths unaccounted for in tribal names.
 43. Aristotle makes a distinction between genus and accident, the former of which is predicated of a number of things “exhibiting differences in kind.” See Aristotle, *Topics* 102b, in *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W.D. Ross (Chicago: William Benton, 1952), 2 vols., 1:145. The confusion between genus and type is significant in the history of racial classification: see Banton, *Racial Theories*, pp. 44–80.
 44. An example of a seemingly contrary claim is “We are hungry”; hunger does not properly belong to a collective, but to individual bodies. The “we” in this case is idiomatic for “each of us.” Politically, this relates to the legal notion of a corporation or collective as a *persona ficta*. See F.W. Maitland, “Introduction” in his translation of Gierke, *Political Theories*, pp. xiv–xxxv.

45. Guy Halsall compares the adoption of a range of identities by individuals in Merovingian Gaul to holding a hand of cards; in "Social Identities and Social Relationships in Early Merovingian Gaul," *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: an Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. Ian Wood (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1998), pp. 141–75. Here a card represents a collective identity, but is held individually (something like Wallace's accessories, above). I would argue instead that collective identity cannot be held individually; we are speaking here of declared allegiances, not of existential identities. Thus, for example, dying on behalf of one's allegiance demands loyalty, not self-interest. See Andrew Bowie, "Introduction," in *The Subject and the Text*, p. xxxix, explaining Manfred Frank's opposition to Richard Rorty who "tries to make the subject merely the concatenation of a 'web of beliefs.'"
46. This is the approach taken by Michael Richter, "Bede's *Angli*: Angles or English?" *Peritia* 3 (1984):99–114.
47. In Steven Fanning, "Bede, *Imperium*, and the Bretwaldas," *Speculum* 66 (1991): 1–26, at 10.
48. Susan Reynolds, "Medieval *Origines Gentium* and the Community of the Realm," *History* 68 (1983):375–390, at 383. It is from Reynolds that I take the idea "of a natural, *given* existence of collective groups" (p. 389). See also Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900–1300*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), esp. pp. 250–56.
49. Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 53; Wolfram, *Germanic Peoples*, p. 8; and Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 7 ("ethnischen Prozesse") and pp. 72–78. Following Geary, Wolfram, and Pohl, I argue that ethnicity is also a narrative phenomenon; see also W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Conservation of Races* in *The Idea of Race*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000), pp. 108–117. But see Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race" in Bernasconi and Lott, pp. 118–35. The relation between a corporeal and an abstracted ethnicity is discussed at length by Andrew Tyrrell, "*Corpus Saxonum*: Early Medieval Bodies and Corporeal Identity," in Frazer, *Social Identity*, pp. 137–155.
50. Even these markers did not always guarantee ethnic identification: see Walter Pohl, "Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity," in *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 17–70, esp. pp. 40–61. This also sometimes seems to be the case with Angles and Saxons in Britain: see D.P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings* (1991; New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 12–14. And it is possibly the case with Saxons and Britons: see Michael E. Jones, *The End of Roman Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 22; and John Hines, "Britain after Rome: Between Multiculturalism and Monoculturalism" in *Cultural Identity and Archaeology: The Construction of European Communities*, Paul Graves-Brown, Sian Jones, and Clive Gamble, eds. (London: Routledge, 1996).
51. Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans, AD 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 25 (following Frantisek Graus) and Pohl, *Die Germanen*, p. 11: "Eine solche Vermengung von Teutonen, Germanen und Deutschen ist freilich anachronistisch." On the term "German" and its early and primarily geographical connotation, see Henry H. Howorth, "The Germans of Caesar," *The English Historical Review* 91 (1908):417–33. On the wide

- variety of peoples recorded by Romans on their frontiers, see Hugh Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 20–28.
52. Roberta Frank, “Germanic Legend in Old English Literature,” in Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 88–106, at p. 94. According to Frank, the phrase was used in 860 A.D. On the Germanic reflexes of *teudisca*, see Wolfram, *Germanic Peoples*, pp. 16–19, and p. 32; and Green, *Language and History*, pp. 123–30.
 53. See, for example, Walter Pohl, “The Empire and the Lombards: Treaties and Negotiations in the Sixth Century,” in *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 75–133, esp. p. 76 and p. 87; and Fanning’s important study on *imperium* and Anglo-Saxon *gens*, above.
 54. See Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (a.d. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 4. The early ninth-century life of Charlemagne by Einhard notes that some eastern Germanic tribes, the Bohemians and Serbians among them, “are almost identical in their language, although they differ greatly in habit and customs”; Lewis Thorpe, trans., *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer: Two Lives of Charlemagne* (London: Penguin, 1969), p. 69. The persistence of an ancient sense of English national existence is argued by Tugene, *L’image*, p. 25.
 55. The important distinction between conceiving the foreign as “other” and permitting oneself to understand the foreign is made by Richard Rorty, “On ethnocentrism: A reply to Clifford Geertz,” in Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, Truth* (Cambridge University Press, 1991) pp. 203–210, at p. 203.
 56. The portrait of Christ in German garb is a commonplace of Old English studies. See Thomas D. Hill, “The Christian Language and Theme of *Beowulf*,” in *Companion to Old English Poetry*, eds. Aertsen and Bremmer, pp. 63–77; G. Ronald Murphy, *The Saxon Savior: The Germanic Transformation of the Gospel in the Ninth-Century Heliand* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and James C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (Oxford University Press, 1994).
 57. Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy* (Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 370; Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, p. 32.
 58. Leonard Bloomfield, *Language* (1935; rpt. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), §§ 9.1, 9.2. Bloomfield’s approach has been modified substantially; see Geoffrey J. Huck and John A. Goldsmith, *Ideology and Linguistic Theory: Noam Chomsky and the Deep Structure Debates* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 19–45. The defining force of a particular language on perception is claimed by Green, *Language and History*, where vernacular terms replaced Latin ones in Latin histories for fear of “distorting the thought-world of the barbarians on whom they report” (p. 2).
 59. Julia Kristeva, *Language: the Unknown*, tr. Anne M. Menke (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 138–40; Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), pp. 57–59; and Irvine, *Textual Culture*, pp. 257–59. But deep structure does not have immediate semantic force: Neil Smith, *Chomsky: Ideas and Ideals* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 61–62. Chomsky writes that semantic and phonic properties “are ‘syntactic’ in the broader sense that they have to do with mental representations”; Chomsky, *Language and Thought*, p. 52. See in

- this regard Peter Carruthers, *Language, Thought, and Consciousness: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), chapter 8; and Hilary Putnam, *Representation and Reality* (MIT Press, 1992), chapter 2.
60. Stephen G. Nichols, "Foreword," in Michael Riffaterre, *Fictional Truth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. vi–x, at p. viii.
 61. Varro, *On the Latin Language*, ed. and trans. Roland G. Kent (1938; Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 244–45. The word's Greek and Sanskrit cognates mean "to put" or "to place."
 62. Webs of semantic association were traced in early medieval dictionaries, or *distinctiones*; Evans, *Language and Logic*, pp. 80–85. An excellent modern example is Green, *Language and History*.
 63. I borrow this approach in part from George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), who argue that metaphor is the primary filter of experience. See also their *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), in which they describe "how extensive a role metaphor plays in the way we function, the way we conceptualize our experience, and the way we speak" (p. 115). An explicit application of these theories to literary expression is made by Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind* (Oxford University Press, 1996). Importantly, a metaphor may organize reality for us conveniently, but it does not do so exclusively: "we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines" (*Metaphors*, p. 3). This differs from Sapir-Whorf insofar as Lakoff and Johnson suppose, for example, that a speaker of English *can* think and talk about a relationship as a journey, but he is not *compelled* to do so. Other metaphors can be adopted. This position does not presume an extraphenomenological reality against which metaphor can be measured. I therefore disagree with Tugene, *L'image de la nation anglaise*, who argues, "La dimension ethnique de l'origine n'est pas confinée au niveau de la métaphore ou de l'imagerie naïve Elle tient une place centrale dans le système idéologique..." (p. 21).
 64. "which strike [or inspire] the greatest terror of fear [or, of fearsome terror] in humankind." Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1995), pp. 87–88. See also Michael Lapidge, "Beowulf and the Psychology of Terror" in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period*, ed. Helen Damico and John Leyerle (Kalamazoo, MI, 1993), pp. 373–402, p. 384, of Grendel's approach to Heorot (ll. 702–27): "It is because the monster lies beyond our comprehension, because we cannot visualize it at all, that its approach is one of the most terrifying moments in English literature" (cited in Orchard, p. 35).
 65. Michael Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West: The Early Middle Ages, A.D. 400–1000* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 44; Wolfram, *Germanic Peoples*, p. 28. In this respect it is important to differentiate a vague, unattested sense of ethnicity from that which arises in historical narratives; see Howe, *Mythmaking*, p. 46: "Anglo-Saxon Christians...enjoyed the privilege of rewriting history."
 66. Paul Ricoeur writes that "order itself proceeds from the metaphorical constitution of semantic fields, which themselves give rise to genus and species," *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny et al. (University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 22–23; see also George Taylor, ed., *Paul Ricoeur: Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. xxxi–xxxii.

67. I borrow this idea from Jacques Le Goff, *Histoire et mémoire* (1977; rpt. Paris: Gallimard, 1988), p. 194. See also Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 10.
68. Dany-Robert Dufour puts it succinctly in “La fabrique de l’enfant ‘postmoderne,’” *Le Monde diplomatique* (November 2001), pp. 10–11: “Parler, c’est transmettre des récits, des croyances, des noms propres, des genealogies, des rites, des obligations, des savoirs, des rapports sociaux..., mais avant tout la parole elle-même.” Similarly, André Leroi-Gourhan describes an *ethnic memory* as something “qui assure la reproduction des comportements dans les sociétés humaine” (cited in Le Goff, *Histoire*, p. 108). See also Frazer, “Introduction,” p. 4: “People form multiple, changing, biographical identities by placing themselves or being placed within a series of emplotted stories”; and similarly, Niles, *Homo Narrans*, p. 2.
69. *OED* lists its first occurrence as F.Singer in *Social Research* 29 (1962), 423.
70. See C.P. Jones, “vo and vo in Herodotus,” *The Classical Quarterly* 46.2 (1996): 315–20, 316–17. Liddell and Scott define ; as “a number of people accustomed to live together...a nation, people,” and vo ; as “race, stock, family”; *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (1889; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). I discuss *gens* more fully below. Notably, Æthelred employed *gens* to distinguish between Anglo-Saxons and Danes: “Omnibus enim in hac patria de gentibus satis constat fore”
71. Heinrich Härke in the discussion following Walter Pohl, “Ethnic Names and Identities in the British Isles: A Comparative Perspective” in John Hines, ed., *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1997), pp. 7–40, p.36. He is speaking especially of the terms *Rasse* and *Ethnizität*; see Pohl, *Die Germanen*, pp. 5–7. For discussions of these words in current ultra-right-wing British, German, and French politics, see Werner Schriffauer, “Europäische Ängste—Metaphoren und Phantasmen im Diskurs der Neuen Rechten in Europa,” in Wolfgang Kaschuba, ed. *Kulturen—Identitäten—Diskurse: Perspektiven europäischer Ethnologie* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), pp. 45–63, at p. 47. See also Banton, *Racial Theories*, pp. 196–99.
72. Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1961), p. 15. For a brief history of the sociological approach to ethnic identity, see Sharon Macdonald, “Identity Complexes in Western Europe: Social Anthropological Perspectives,” in Sharon Macdonald, ed., *Inside European Identities: Ethnography in Western Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), pp. 1–26.
73. Herwig Wolfram, “Origo et religio: Ethnic traditions and literature in early medieval texts,” *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (1994):19–38, at 20. See also Richard C. Hoffmann, “Outsiders by Birth and Blood: Racist Ideologies and Realities around the Periphery of Medieval European Culture,” *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 6 (1983):3–34, 4.
74. Here I follow Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), p. 2: poetry “is comprehensive of events but not in itself productive of new events.” But see Werner Sollers, who asks after “the active contribution literature makes, as a productive force, to the emergence and maintenance of communities by reverberation and of ethnic distinction”; Werner Sollers, “Introduction: The Invention of Ethnicity,” in Werner Sollers, ed., *The Invention of*

- Ethnicity* (Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. ix–xx, at p. xv and p. xiv. Similarly, Thormann argues that the nation “is a symbolic product” of texts; in “*Chronicle Poems*,” p. 60.
75. See Noel Ignatieff, *How the Irish Became White* (Routledge, 1996); Matthew Frye Jackson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Vron Ware, “In Spite of Whiteness: Race, Gender, and Questions of Political Agency,” in *Negotiating Identities: Essays on Immigration and Culture in Present-Day Europe*, eds. Aleksandra Ålund and Raoul Granqvist (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 45–70; and Guterl, *Color of Race*.
 76. Chapter Two; H. Mattingly, trans., *Tacitus on Britain and Germany* (London: Penguin, 1948), p. 102. The most recent and complete edition is Allan A. Lund, ed., *P. Cornelius Tacitus. Germania* (Universitätsverlag Heidelberg, 1988), pp. 248–82.
 77. Wolfram, “Origo,” 21.
 78. See II Cnut 41, and VIII Æthelred 26, in F. Lieberman, *Die Gesetze der Angeln’sachsen* (Halle, 1903–16).
 79. Some texts do, though. Craig Davis argues for the use of an ethnic mythos as a means of dating *Beowulf*: “culturally dominant sacred narratives (myths)...reflect the institutional structure of their societies and evolve according to general changes in social organization”; *Beowulf and the Demise of Germanic Legend in England* (New York: Garland, 1996), p. xvi.
 80. Wolfram, “Origo,” 19. For example, the moral world which informed early medieval texts may be lost to us entirely. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), whose argument is still compelling.
 81. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 11–12. On cultural filters, see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, chapter 1, where they are called “frameworks.” Taylor argues that identity follows primarily from a sense of the good, from the ethical life.
 82. Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace* (New York: Signet, 1968), pp. 1454–55. This passage was generously pointed out to me by Marian Niles Walker. For the countervailing rational schema of history, see Immanuel Kant, *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963).
 83. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 8. Compare John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1971), pp. 560–67; Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 4; see also Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), pp. 3–18.
 84. John Calvin, *Institution of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1845), I, 1.3. Compare Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1.7, and 1.6.1, where no innate knowledge is assumed. Faith, rather than knowledge, sometimes takes predominance in judgment: an individual is capable of juridical judgment as long as it is carried out in faith. See, for example, John Bunyan, *Justification by an Imputed Righteousness*, “As to such acts [done in faith], God may or may not look at the qualification of those that do them.” On the Lutheran origins of justification by faith, see A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1964), pp. 59–82.
 85. Taylor, *Sources*, pp. 374–376. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (NY: St. Martin’s, 1965), pp. 257–260; *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Paul Carus (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1985), pp. 12–24.

- On the history of Nature as an image and idea, see C.S.Lewis, "Nature" in *Studies in Words*, C.S.Lewis (1960; rpt. Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 24–74.
86. This is the basis of Horkheimer's critique of Kant; see David Ingram and Julia Simon-Ingram, *Critical Theory: The Essential Readings* (New York: Paragon, 1992), pp. xxv–xxvi.
 87. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 33. See also Michael J.Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1996), p. 23. Sandel writes, "On the liberal view, it is illegitimate to base laws on judgments about morality and immorality, because to do so violates the principle that government should be neutral among ends. It violates people's 'right to moral independence' by embodying in law a particular theory of the good life and the decent society" (p. 76); the resulting "ideal of neutrality has emerged alongside a certain conception of the self" (p. 79). On the unity of mankind with respect to justice, see Robert G.Sullivan, *Justice and the Social Context of Early Middle High German Literature* (Routledge, 2001), pp. 11–13, and chapter 1.
 88. See David Lyle Jeffrey, *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 89–96; he describes the medieval "Christian conviction that no reading takes place in an ethical vacuum, and that even the most technical elaborations of linguistic and genre conventions will have at their foundation the question of function, of action" (p. 90). I am indebted to Professor Jeffrey for both his contextualization of contemporary criticism within this longer tradition, and for first introducing me to medieval practices of reading. Similarly, see Robert Louis Stevenson, "The Morality of the Profession of Letters," *Essays in the Art of Writing* (1881; London: Chatto & Windus, 1920), pp. 47–73; and, with respect to the mental categories engendered by Old English literature, Niles, *Homo Narrans*, p. 78.
 89. Frank, *Selbstbewußtsein*, p. 9.
 90. For a clear and thorough description, see Gracia, *Individuation*, and Marenbon, *Early Medieval Philosophy*.
 91. David Aers, "Preface," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26.2 (1996): 199–208, 202. The claim is made and its genealogy described by Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (1972; rpt. University of Toronto Press, 1991). Although self has always been at issue, its basis as a sufficient condition for judgment has only more recently been adopted; see above.
 92. Allen J.Frantzen, *Desire for Origins*, p. 22. See also Brooks, *Anglo-Saxon Myths*, p. 1 (chapter one originally published 1986). Edward Said makes a similar point with respect to nineteenth-century philology in *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), pp. 132–38. My thanks to Robert Sullivan for this reference. On the influence of nineteenth-century historiography on a Norman-Saxon divide, see Clare A.Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 43–73.
 93. *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. Henry Sweet (London: N. Trübner, 1871), p. 467.
 94. In Daniel G.Calder, "Histories and Surveys of Old English Literature: A Chronological Review," *ASE* 10 (1982):201–44, at 212.
 95. Charles D.Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 3.

96. John Mitchell Kemble, *The Saxons in England: A History of the English Commonwealth till the period of the Norman Conquest*, 2 vols. (1848; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1876), 1:5. See also Frantzen, *Desire*, pp. 34–35. On Kemble's career, see Bruce Dickens, "John Mitchell Kemble and Old English Scholarship," *British Academy Papers on Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. E.G.Stanley (Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 57–90.
97. Cited in E.G.Stanley, *The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1964), p. 17.
98. Calder, "Histories," 8.
99. Stopford A.Brooke, *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest* (1898; London: Macmillan, 1926), p. 12 and p. 39. See also Richard Halpern, *Shakespeare among the Moderns* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1997), pp. 17–20. My thanks to Richard Burt for this reference. Brooke's use of "Saxon" distinguishes them from Normans, a distinction to which Edward Freeman did not subscribe. See Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Boydell, 1995), p. 1.
100. C.L.Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (New York: W.W.Norton, 1967), p. 3.
101. Calder, "Histories," 204. Turner may have been influenced by J.G.Herder, especially his notion that racial classification mapped fixed, inherited psychological characteristics. See R.G.Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. Jan van der Dussen (Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 91: "The psychological characteristics of each race were regarded as fixed and uniform, so that instead of the Enlightenment's conception of a single fixed human nature we now have the conception of several fixed human natures."
102. Sharon Turner, *The History of the Anglo-Saxons from the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest*, 3 vols. (Paris: Baudry, 1840). On character, see 1:120–142; on poetry, see Richard C.Payne, "The Rediscovery of Old English Poetry in the English Literary Tradition," in Carl T.Berkhout and Milton McC. Gatch, eds. *Anglo-Saxon Scholarship: The First Three Centuries* (Boston: G.K.Hall, 1982), pp. 149–66, at p. 155. See also Frantzen, *Desire*, p. 33.
103. See Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest*, p. 55. Simmons discusses Turner at length, pp. 53–60. Turner claimed in his third edition to have introduced *Beowulf* to the public, 1:4. See T.A.Shippy, "Introduction" in *Beowulf: The Critical Heritage*, eds. T.A.Shippey and Andreas Haarder (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–74, at pp. 6–10.
104. Andreas Heusler, *Die altgermanische Dichtung* (1923; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), pp. 1–6. *Liedertheorie* sought to recover the ancient lays of Germanic culture, and was in part a tool for political and racial ends. Karl Lachmann, a contemporary of the brothers Grimm, wrote that the author of a *Lied* was *das Volk*; see Frantzen, *Desire*, p. 67. See also Sullivan, *Justice and the Social Context*, who describes the difficulty of employing classical genre categories to early German literature, pp. 9–13.
105. Calder, "Histories," 211.
106. Hippolyte Taine, *History of English Literature*, trans. H.van Loun (1871; Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1873), p. 41.
107. Communities, especially textual communities, in Anglo-Saxon England are studied by Magennis, *Images of Community*, who provides a thorough introduction to the field, pp. 1–15. See also *Anglo-Saxon Scholarship*, eds. Berkhout and Gatch.

108. This debate is sketched by Walter Goffart, "Two Notes on Germanic Antiquity Today," *Traditio* 50 (1995):9–30. Goffart discusses the evidentiary value of origin stories and the development since Reinhard Wenskus of a trust in the affective power of origin stories over group cohesion. Although there is much with which I agree in Goffart, since I concentrate on the formal instrumentality of literature, I chiefly follow Wenskus. For a critique of Wenskus, see a review of his seminal work, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, by Werner Goez, *Historische Zeitschrift* 198 (1964):663–75.
109. Hayes, *Sources*, p. 6.
110. The extreme position is taken by Leo Wiener, *Tacitus' Germania and Other Forgeries* (Philadelphia, 1920). He claims that Tacitus' description of the Germanic war chant is entirely "cribbed out of Vegetius, *De re militari*," III, xviii (p. 274) and that chapters VII and VIII are cribbed from Cæsar (p. 276). Thompson, *Germans*, v, claims Tacitus "pillaged" Poseidonius, but is nevertheless an advocate of Tacitus' authenticity. For the major lines of argument in this regard, see the very helpful T.A.Dorey, ed. *Tacitus* (London, 1969), pp. 1–18. Sir Ronald Syme claims that the *Germania* is a "literary reproduction of the *Bella Germania* of the elder Pliny," in Dorey, p. 13. See Rosemary Woolf, "The Ideal of Men Dying with Their Lord in the *Germania* and in the Battle of Maldon," *ASE* 5 (1976), pp. 63–81, at p. 64–65, who says of Tacitus that "it is also possible that in designing his primitive Golden Age he borrowed this heroic ideal from Caesar and Sallust and, purging it a little of fanatical connotations, transferred it from the peoples of Spain and south-west Gaul to those of Germany." Michael Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in Hilary Term, 1970* (Oxford, 1971), p. 2, like Syme, suggests the influence of the elder Pliny's *Bella Germania*. Other influences are traced by Suzanne Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation gothique: les origines de l'idée de nation en Occident du Ve au VI^e siècle* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1984), pp. 21–23.
111. Wallace-Hadrill, *Germanic Kingship* p. 2: "It amounts to this: the *Germania* is not only an unsafe guide to future Germanic society, it also affords no solid ground for generalization about German society at large in the historian's own time." This may be slightly exaggerated; on the convoluted evidence of Germanic tribes in German lands, see Pohl, *Die Germanen*, pp. 102–03.
112. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), pp. 75–81.
113. Schama, *Landscape*, p. 93. See, for example, Turner, *Anglo-Saxons*, who speaks of the "effeminate habits" of "kingdoms and cities of refined life" (p. 9).
114. See Dorey, *Tacitus*, pp. 12–13. On ethnography in Tacitus, see "Tacitus als Ethnologe," a section of the Introduction by Lund, *Tacitus*, pp. 44–55. On its relation to the genre of ethnology, see his "Die *Germania* des Tacitus als ethno-graphische Schrift," in the same volume, pp. 56–69.
115. Dorey, *Tacitus*, p. 14. See Lund, *Tacitus*, p. 56, who also notes that the *Germania* "abwertend die Kultur der Römer mit der Unkultur der Barbaren konfrontierte oder aber diese wegen ihrer Ursprünglichkeit idealisierte."
116. A.C.Murray, *Germanic Kinship Structure: Studies in Law and Society in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1983), p. 40.
117. *De gubernatione Dei*, in Huntley Hayes, *Sources*, p. 127. This is how Kemble describes the *comitatus*. Salvian adds, illustrating his censorious aims, "The

- impurities of the theatre are unknown among them.” Compare his execration of barbarians in *De gubernatione Dei*, IV, xiv; in George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1948), pp. 132–33: “the Saxons are cruel, the Franks faithless, the Gepidæ inhuman, the Chuni shameless, in short, the life of all barbarian tribes is vice” (trans. Boas).
118. W.R. Jones, “The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13 (1971):376–407, at 377. The binary of barbarian and Roman is convenient, not definitive.
 119. It might be thought that the entire history of Old English Literature as an academic field stands against this proposition, since virtually all of the extant poetic corpus is in unique manuscripts. But, I am speaking here about the direct *influence* of the *Germania*, of which there is little evidence, not of surviving manuscripts, of which there are none from Antiquity. Furthermore, I am arguing that Old English literature did not necessarily have any social impact; which its manuscript history indeed suggests.
 120. See Rodney Potter Robinson, *The Germania of Tacitus: A Critical Edition* (Middletown, CT, 1935), still one of the most detailed textual studies. For a survey of the textual history that takes into account the most recent contributions, see James S.Hirstein, *Tacitus’ Germania and Beatus Rhenanus (1485–1547): A Study of the Editorial and Exegetical Contribution of a Sixteenth-Century Scholar* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995). A wonderful description of Hitler’s attempt to abduct the manuscript is in Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, chapter 1.
 121. Schama, *Landscape*, p. 37.
 122. Robinson, *Germania*, pp. 17, 2, and 1 n. 1. See Hirstein, *Tacitus and Rhenanus*, p. 23. Schama reports that Rudolph “cited Tacitus as the authority for a reference to the river Weser,” himself citing Ludwig Krapf, *Germanenmythus und Reichsideologie: Frühhumanistische Rezeptionsweisen der taciteischen “Germania”* (Tübingen, 1979), p. 4, which I have not been able to see.
 123. Hirstein thinks this most likely and notes Römer’s *Überlieferung*, 2324–2330. Nevertheless, the script of the *Germania* is not the Hersfeld’s Carolingian miniscule, but a fifteenth-century hand, unnamed. See Robinson, *Germania*, p. 16, who directs his readers to Codex Aesinas, ff. 66v–75r. Hirstein claims the Codex Aesinas’ *Germania* was copied by Stefano Guarnieri before 1474; see his *Tacitus and Rhenanus*, p. 24, n. 6; and Schama, *Landscape*, p. 77.
 124. Hirstein, *Tacitus and Rhenanus*, p. 23, n. 1. The chapters paraphrased were 4, and 9 through 11. The only edition is Georgius Heinricus Pertz, ed., *Translatio S. Alexandri auctoribus Rudolfo et Meginharto*, in MGH, *Scriptorum*, t. 2, pp. 673–81; one of the few commentaries, also very thorough, is August Wetzel, *Die Translatio S.Alexandri. Eine Kritische Untersuchung* (Kiel, 1881).
 125. Hirstein, *Tacitus and Rhenanus*, p. 25, notes that the *Germania* appeared first in Bologna in 1472, but was printed first in 1472–73 “as part of the *Spirensis*.”
 126. Woolf, “Ideal,” p. 77. This is one of the more concise summations of the evidence.
 127. This citation is from the *Annales*, not to the *Germania*, which is presumably why Woolf ignores it. Robinson, *Tacitus*, p. 1, n.1. The *Annales of Fulda* are edited by Pertz, *Annales Fuldensis sive annales Regni Francorum Orientalis*, 2nd ed., MGH *Scriptores*, t. 2 (Turnhout, 1998). An English translation has recently been produced by Timothy Reuter, *The Annals of Fulda* (Manchester, 1992), although it covers only the annals written by Rudolfus, those after 882 A.D. Wilhelm Levison, *England and*

- the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), p. 144, says that the *Germania* was known at Fulda, but not in England. Woolf suggests, on the contrary and only hypothetically, that an Englishman, possibly the author of *Maldon*, may have traveled to Fulda and seen the manuscript, "Ideal," p. 77. This is certainly the long way around.
128. See Lewis Thorpe, "Introduction," *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer: Two Lives of Charlemagne* (London, 1969), p. 19. His is a translation of MS Paris BN *fons latin* 10758, following Jaffé's 1867 edition. See also Pertz, *Translatio*.
 129. Lappenberg, ed., *Adami Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, MGH, *Scriptores*, VII, t. 2 (Turnhout, 1998). See I, 1, a direct quote of the *Vita*, §15; see also I, 34, p. 26: "Einhardus in Gestis Saxonum."
 130. Lappenberg, *Adami*, pp. iii–iv. He enumerates the works and provides references to the passages in Adam's text. The dates are from Pertz's edition of the *Translatio*, p. 673.
 131. I, 34, p. 26: "Sique temporum [861] seriem diligenter computemus, ipsum est tempus quo in Saxoniam translatio sancti Alexandri contigit."
 132. Pertz, *Translatio*, p. 673.
 133. Wetzel, "Beilage," in his *Translatio*, n.p.
 134. A case for the *Germania* being a forgery is not entirely implausible at Fulda in the ninth century. For a short list of such forgeries as well as appropriate references, see Levison, *England*, p. 125, n. 4. Nevertheless, its being a forgery is unlikely, especially since it is in the style of Tacitus, and since a comparison of the *Germania* and the *Translatio* suggests Rudolf's judicious use of certain sections of Tacitus—*post hoc ergo propter hoc*.
 135. Pertz, *Translatio*, p. 675. See also Robinson, *Tacitus*, p. 278, who quotes the relative passages of Rudolf in a band mid-page.
 136. Robinson, *Tacitus*, p. 285. Mention of Hercules and Mars is excised by Rudolf.
 137. See Pertz, *Translatio*, p. 675, and Robinson, *Tacitus*, p. 286.
 138. Pertz, *Translatio*, pp. 675–76. He takes this description from Einhard; see Pertz, p. 675, n. 7. Einhard calls the Germans rapists and arsonists, as prone to submission as they are to defiance; see Thorpe, *Einhard*, book 2.
 139. The exception is the Aestii, who, according to Tacitus, are unusually industrious for Germans; see the *Germania*, chapter xiv.
 140. Women are said to rule among the Sitones, see chapter xlvii.
 141. Although lazy (given to sleep and "otium," ch. xv), this is not to suggest that hard work is a virtue which Germans lack. Instead, hard work, or *industria*, is to Tacitus a characteristic of the venal and base man. See Joseph Lucas, *Les obsessions de Tacitus* (Leiden, 1974), p. 27 and p. 33. The Germans are therefore to be considered leisured.
 142. Schama, *Landscape*, p. 87.
 143. I follow Chadwick who wrote in 1905, "Unfortunately, it has been customary to assume that Tacitus' account of the ancient Germans gives a true picture of the institution of every Teutonic nation," p. 351, n.l, and who claims Tacitus' evidence "is manifestly inadequate," p. 351.
 144. Hines, "Britain After Rome," p. 264. See also Nicole Gardiner-Stallært, *From the Sword to the Pen: An Analysis of the Concept of Loyalty in Old English Secular Heroic Poetry* (New York, 1988), who claims that with both Cæsar and Tacitus, "They describe those Germanic tribes who confronted Rome on its northern frontiers

- and who therefore lived farther to the South than those tribes that invaded Great Britain," p. 17.
145. See Malcolm Todd, *The Early Germans* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 216–218.
 146. Levison, *England*, p. 144, n. 1. He suggests, on the authority of L. Weisgerber, that the archetype of the Hersfeld and Fulda copies may have been Irish.
 147. Helmut Gneuss, "A preliminary list of manuscripts written or owned in England up to 1100," ASE 9 (1981):1–60; revised as *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001). Michael Lapidge surveys surviving booklists in his "Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England" in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. Mary P. Richards (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 87–168. See also J.D.A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to the English, 597–1066* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1967), p. 247; *Catalogi Veteres Librorum ecclesiae cathedralis dunelm* (London: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1838); Edward Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries Including a Handbook of Library Economy*, 2 vols. (London, 1859); Montague Rhodes James, *On the Abbey of S. Edmund at Bury* (Cambridge, 1895); and Ramona Bressie, "Libraries of the British Isles in the Anglo-Saxon Period," in *The Medieval Library*, ed. James Westfall Thompson (Chicago, 1939), pp. 102–125.
 148. Many terms used by Tacitus are apparently borrowed from Caesar's *De bello gallica*. "Pagus," for example, was used to describe tribes after the manner of the Italian *pagi*. See Brenda M. Bell, "The Contribution of Julius Caesar to the Vocabulary of Ethnography," *Latomus* 54 (1995):753–767, esp. 760–61. See also Nora Chadwick, *The Celts* (London, 1971), p. 57, who describes *pagi* as subdivisions of sixteen separate political units in Gaul before the Roman conquest. Bell notes that Caesar "was the first extant Latin author to extend *pagus* to non-Italians," p. 761. For the relation of *pagus* to Tacitus, see R.E.A. Palmer, *The Archaic Community of the Romans* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 57–59, at Bell's recommendation.
 149. Bell, "Ethnography," p. 758.
 150. This popular rhetoric is evident in the comic book series *Asterix et Obelix*, for example. See in particular Paul-Marie Duval, "Introduction: Vercingétorix, l'histoire et la légende" in *Vercingétorix*, Ed. Camille Jullian (Paris: Marabout, 1963), pp. 9–10. The effect of French revolutionary rhetoric on models of race is traced by Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: the Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2002); and David A. Bell, "Lingua Populi, Lingua Dei: Language, Religion, and the Origins of French Revolutionary Nationalism," *The American Historical Review* 100.5 (1995):1403–1437. Bell relies on Daniel Fabre, who argues that the revolutionary government was reluctant "to make language and folklore the heart of an ethnic identity" (p. 1406, n. 8).
 151. See Günter Herold, *Der Volksbegriff im Sprachschatz des Althochdeutschen und Altniederdeutschen* (Halle: Akademischer Verlag, 1941), p. 1, citing Vilmar's "Deutsche Altetümer im Heliand."
 152. Francis B. Gummere, *Germanic Origins: A Study in Primitive Culture* (New York: Scribner's, 1892), p. 1.
 153. Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 11.
 154. Maurice Olender, "Europe, or How to Escape Babel," *History and Theory* 33.4 (1994):5–25, at 17–21; and Umberto Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 101.

155. The great linguist E. Prokosch warned, "The concept of an Indo-European family is based upon linguistic facts, but it does not imply any anthropological coherence. We have no right whatever to speak of an Indo-European ('Aryan') race"; *A Comparative Germanic Grammar* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1939), p. 21.
156. See Hagen Schulze, *The Course of German Nationalism: From Frederick the Great to Bismarck, 1763–1867*, trans. Sarah Hanbury-Tenison (Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. pp. 64–69; and J. Schrijnen, *Einführung in das Studium der indogermanischen Sprachwissenschaft*, ed. Walter Fischer (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1921), pp. 23–38, 63–71, and especially 78–81, "Sprache und Volk": "Eine völlig übereinstimmende westeuropäische Volkskultur würde auch zu einer stets engeren Verwandtschaft aller westeuropäischen Sprachen führen" (p. 80). The term *Kulturnation* was coined by F. Meinecke in his *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* (Munich, 1928), and distinguished as that nation which *might be* from that which *is*, termed *Staatsnation*; see F. W. Walbank, "Nationality as a Factor in Roman History," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 76 (1972): 145–168, at 146.
157. Todd, *Early Germans*, p. 263.
158. Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Building a National Literature: The Case of Germany, 1830–1870*, trans. Renate Baron Franciscono (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 115–22.
159. In Stanley, *Paganism*, p. 33; the translation is Stanley's. In contrast, see Wallace Hadrill, *Germanic Kingship*, p. 4, in which Celtic and Roman influences are credited with distinguishing the Germans "politically from their ancestors."
160. In Stanley, *Paganism*, p. 33; the translation is Stanley's. On the detrimental influence of this approach on German studies, see the brief pamphlet by J. A. Cramb, *Germany and England* (London, 1914). For more recent assessments of the close relation between Britons and Saxons in England, see Jones, *End of Roman Britain*.
161. Carleton Huntley Hayes, *An Introduction to the Sources Relating to the Germanic Invasions* (New York, 1967), p. 51. This is also pointed out by Woolf, "Ideal," p. 63, n. 3, in which she makes mention of Stanley's classic work, *Paganism*, which concentrates on this nineteenth-century predilection. For a helpful overview of the racial characteristics of Celt and Saxon as they apply to the study of Anglo-Saxon poetry, see the Introduction to Wright, *The Irish Tradition*.
162. *Celticism as a Myth* (London, 1889), p. x. See Sam Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination* (New Haven, 1994), especially chapter 6. On the early medieval reflex of these ideas, especially on Germans as noble savages, see Boas, *Primitivism*, pp. 129–153. And see Schama, *Landscape*, p. 117.
163. Gilmer W. Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich: A Study of Race and History in Nazi Textbooks* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), pp. 49–51.
164. Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich*, p. 22.
165. *Etymologiae*, XX, xix, cap. 23: "Nonnullae etiam gentes non solum in vestibus sed et in corpore aliqua sibi propria quasi insignia vindicant: ut videmus cirros Germanorum, granos et cinibar Gotorum, stigmata Brittonum." See Pohl, *Die Germanen*, p. 7. Not bred in the bone, since Isidore believed race derived from language, itself disposed at Babel. See chapter 2. Matthew Arnold termed such Germanists "Teutomanics" in 1867; see Halpern, *Shakespeare*, p. 20.
166. An overview of the debate is given by Gummere, *Germanic Origins*, pp. 1–29; the book was reprinted in Germany as *Founders of England* (New York: G. E. Stechert

- & C Co., 1930) with supplementary notes and bibliographies by Francis P. Magoun, Jr. Gummere writes, "Is the heart of our literature Germanic or Celtic? Or is it neither? Is it rather a result of classical or even Romance traditions?" (p. 5). On Celtic origins as they were imagined in the later nineteenth century, see George Rawlinson, *The Origin of Nations* (New York: Scribner, Welford, & Armstrong, 1878), pp. 132–46.
167. In John, "Feudalism," p. 129. See also James Campbell, "Stenton's Anglo-Saxon England with Special Reference to the Earlier Period" in Donald Matthew, ed., *Stenton's Anglo-Saxon England Fifty Years On* (Reading, 1994), pp. 49–59, esp. p. 56. Ironically, C.V. Wedgwood claims that the political failures of Germany might in part be a result of its long-standing predilection towards feudalism; see C.V. Wedgwood, "The Origins of Germany," *History and Hope: Essays on History and the English Civil War* (1946; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), pp. 19–27, p. 22.
 168. James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2000), p. 26. On fealty and the fief as postmedieval concepts, see Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994). The classic and arguably outdated description of medieval fealty is made by Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L.A. Manyon (University of Chicago Press, 1961), 2 vols.
 169. See Eric John, "English Feudalism and the Structure of Anglo-Saxon Society" in *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies*, ed. Eric John (Leicester, 1966), pp. 128–53, p. 129. Stubbs offered a vision of what John calls "the England of Queen Victoria rendered after the manner of Tacitus," p. 130. Stenton's seminal *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1943) is, according to John, "a more detailed, more learned, restatement of Stubbs's original thesis," p. 131. On the other side of this question, according to John, are Sir Frederick Maitland and Sir Owen Chadwick.
 170. The list is suggested by Stenton himself. See his "Early English History" in Doris Mary Stenton, ed., *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England, Being the Collected papers of Frank Mary Stenton* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 346–56.
 171. S.J. Crawford, *Anglo-Saxon Influence on Western Christendom, 600–800* (Oxford, 1933), p. 36. Crawford continues, "It is significant that all our extant heroic poetry in Anglo-Saxon deals with themes and events which belong to the heroic age on the Continent..." p. 36.
 172. Frank, "Germanic Legend," p. 94. See also Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton University Press, 1988), and Matthew Innes, "Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past," in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Yizhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge University Press, 2000).
 173. Bede says the invaders come from "de tribus Germaniae populis fortioribus"; "Germania" may be a geographical designation or a racial one. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (1969; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 50–51.
 174. Gustav Ehrismann, *Geschichte der deutschen Literature bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 2nd ed. (1932; Munich: C.H. Beck, 1954), 4 vols., 1.16 (He refers here to Karl Müllenhoff). Ehrismann conscientiously distinguishes between various races and their literary provenance, which he counts collectively as *deutsch*. See also Frederik Hammerich, *Älteste christliche Epik der Angelsachsen, Deutschen und Nordländer* (Bertelsman, 1874), who describes literary criticism as the search for "die Seele eines Volkes" (p. 1).

175. See Alfons Nehring, *Studien zur indogermanischen Kultur und Urheimat, Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Band 4 (Vienna, 1936), pp. 223–229. Nehring is discussing the racial relationship between a “teutonordische Rasse” and an Indo-Germanic race; his notes provide an introduction to contemporary work on the topic.
176. Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 15. See, for example, Ehrismann, *Geschichte*, p. v–vi.
177. In Martin Travers, *Critics of Modernity: the Literature of the Conservative Revolution in Germany, 1890–1933* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), p. 34.
178. Herold, *Volksbegriff*. Its use by the Third Reich is suggested by a stamp in my copy of the book comprising an imperial eagle gripping a swastika over the words, “Staatliches Studienseminar Linz A.D.”
179. Herold, *Volksbegriff*, p. 290 and p. 13. See also Ehrismann, *Geschichte*, 1:1–5.
180. Robert Faesi, *Heimat und Genius* (Leipzig: Huber & Co., 1933), p. 148: “Du hegst uns, Muttererde,/Du ziehst hinan uns, Vaterland,/Daß jung auf altem Herde/Des Lebens Flamme werde.” The ascription of this genius to blood and language, rather than soil alone, can be seen in Karl Kurt Klein, *Literaturgeschichte des Deutschtums im Ausland: Schriftum und Geistesleben der deutschen Volksgruppen im Ausland vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1939), pp. vii–viii. See also Schama, *Landscape*, pp. 112–116, and his discussion of Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl.
181. Todd, *Early Germans*, pp. 256–57; but see Frank, “Germanic Legend,” p. 104. Earlier ideas of empire are explored in the essay collection, *Die Reichsidee in der deutschen Dichtung des Mittelalters*, ed. Rüdiger Schnell (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983); and Green, *Language and History*, pp. 121–140.
182. Schama, *Landscape*, chapter 2. But see von der Dunk, *Deutsche Denkmal*, on Kaiser Joseph I, as a corrective example, pp. 460 ff.
183. Schama, *Landscape*, p. 118.
184. This form of primitivism is illustrated by Gummere, *Germanic Origins*, who writes: “Facts have wider bearings and life is more uniform of tone, the further we go back in history. Early times lacked diversity of employment, fine divisions in the drift of thought and feeling” (p. 6). See Joseph Jurt, “Die Konstruktion nationaler Identitäten in Europa (18. bis 20. Jahrhundert),” *Francia* 28.3 (2001):1–14, especially, p. 3.
185. Kurt Waselowsky writes that the brothers Grimm saw in their collected fairytales “die natürliche Heimstätte dieser altüberlieferten Geschichten”; “Einleitung” in *Die Märchen der Brüder Grimm* (Augsburg: Goldmann, n.d.), pp. 5–8, at p. 5.
186. Konrad Köstlin, “Das ethnographische Paradigma und die Jahrhundertwende,” *Ethnologia Europaea* 24 (1994):5–20, at 6. Köstlin argues that the shift from ethnic collective to nation includes a transferal of Herder’s formulations of a *Volksgeist* to the national collective.
187. Frank, “Germanic legend,” p. 90; and Heusler, *Altgermanische Dichtung*, pp. 79–97. See also Köstlin, p. 12.
188. R.von Kralik, *Zur nordgermanischen Sagengeschichte in Beiträge zur Volk skunde, Quellen und Forschungen zur deutschen Volkskunde*, Band 4 (Vienna: Verlag Dr. Rud Ludwig, 1908).
189. Gummere, *Germanic Origins*, p. 473.

190. Wormald, *Making of English Law*, p. 11; and as partial illustration, Heusler, *Altgermanische Dichtung*, pp. 66–79. The same assumption of an author as political embassy for a group is illustrated in a recent review of author Z.Z. Packer's collection, *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere* (Riverhead, 2003); *Vogue* reviewer Dana Goodyear writes that Packer "is poised to give energetic voice to itinerant blacks in the urban South" (March 2003, p. 418).
191. "Wie das Volkslied, so konnten diese Geschichten nur am fiktiven Anfang, im nationalen Ursprung gefunden werden. Dieser mußte freigelegt werden. Denn das Ethnische mußte ein Allgemeines sein, wenn es als gemeinsames Vielfaches für alle Mitglieder der Gesellschaft brauchbar sein sollte. So wie sich das Volkslied vom alltäglich gesungenen Lied entfernte, um dann als veredelte Inkarnation des Nationalen dienen zu können, mußte auch das Ethnische von seiner Wirklichkeit abgehoben, entfremdet werden"; Köstlin, "Paradigma," pp. 12–13.
192. See, for example, Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), who posits a cultural continuity over millennia from coincidences in stories written a millennium apart. He then chides critics for their lack of daring: "This may be a leap too wide for some scholars to contemplate," p. 11. Compare Bloomfield's fallacy of homogeneity, above.
193. See, for example, Stanley B. Greenfield, *The Interpretation of Old English Poems* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), chapter 6. Even "The Phoenix" is stripped of religious meaning to accord with a notion of a pervasive, heathen Germanic spirit. Yet, recent work by the Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture and at the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* project clearly show the heavy dependence of Old English texts on Latin exemplars.
194. According to Frank, in the work of Heidegger and Gadamer the extension of language corresponds to the extension of *Geist*. This linguistic turn "makes language into the equivalent of Hegel's *Geist*", Bowie, "Introduction," p. xxxvii.
195. Thus my approach is exclusive of the "textual communities" into which texts are introduced. In this regard, see Martin Irvine, "Medieval Textuality and the Archaeology of Textual Culture," in Frantzen, *Two Languages*, pp. 181–210, esp. p. 184. See Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton University Press, 1983). See also Carol Braun Pasternack, *The Textuality of Old English Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 2–8.
196. As an analogy, the atheistic nihilism of much modern American literature does not represent vast millions of Americans of sincere religious faith.
197. As an example of various possible categories, see Heusler, *Altgermanische Dichtung*, who includes Ritualdichtung, Zauberdichtung, Spruchdichtung, Merkdichtung, and so forth. See also F. Schubel, *Englische Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1954), pp. 14–27; and Pilch and Tristram, *Altenglische Literatur*, pp. 21–77, for slightly modified categories. Recent English-language criticism rarely deals with genre *per se* in Old English, with the important exception of Frantzen, "Diverse Nature"; Frantzen argues that Old English poetry fits poorly into contemporary literary categories, and we should look instead to the "purposes poetry answered in the culture" (p. 15).
198. This is not a distinction between an imagined world and the physical world, which is famously made by Northrop Frye, "The Motive for Metaphor," in *The Educated Imagination* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1973), pp. 1–11, at p.

8. Frye's distinction is useful, but (understandably) oversimplified, since there is no way to describe what is observed except as observed, no matter what we might feel about the matter.
199. Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 8.
 200. This is ultimately Hegel's position: history produces any given people, equally imbued with a historically determined *Geist*, what Peter Singer has described as "an over-arching collective Mind"; Hegel's charge is to seek individual freedom from the forces of history. See "Hegel," *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 339–43. Marx will characterize the nineteenth century in Hegelian terms as "the putrescence of the absolute spirit"; Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 146–200, at p. 147.
 201. Furthermore, texts demand literacy, an ability not only to read, but to read well. This narrows the audience, and further limits the applicability of cultural claims on behalf of textual culture to a relatively small number of people. These remaining few, simply in being literate, testify to their partial occlusion from a larger culture whose records and ideologies are, for the most part, irrevocably lost.
 202. The phrase is from Raymond Bradley and Norman Swartz, *Possible Worlds: An Introduction to Logic and its Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1979), quoted in Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, p. 21.
 203. Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p. 43. See also Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 75: "a metaphor causes us to think about something in a new way, to reorganize concepts we already have, and to form new conceptualizations."
 204. Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, p. 93.
 205. Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, p. 15.
 206. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*, p. x. White does not argue for the modality of fiction.
 207. Walter Pohl, "Ethnic Names," pp. 7–40, p. 9. See also Elias J. Bickerman, "Origines Gentium," *Classical Philology* 47 (1952):65–81; and Reynolds, "Medieval *Origines Gentium*."
 208. John Hill, *The Cultural World of Beowulf* (University of Toronto, 1995).
 209. I try to distinguish between "viking" as an act of plundering, and "Viking" as a nominal designation.
 210. Nicholas Brooks makes this suggestion with respect to ethnic identity and myths of origin: "[I]t is likely to have been the warrior kings and dynasties of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries that imposed their own myths asserting that their peoples were distinctively Angle, or Saxon or Jutish when in fact this was at most true only of their own dynasty" (*Anglo-Saxon Myths*, p. 5).
 211. J.R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1894; University of Toronto Press, 1993). The citation is from *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliot van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), *ASPR* 3. On *giedd* see Niles, *Homo Narrans*, pp. 16–17.
 212. Another possibility, of course, is that each generation reinvents culture for itself by accessing a previously defined body of texts, a canon. The limits of culture in this

- view would be determined by systems of textual organization, inherited through education and tradition, rather than by anything essential to the texts themselves.
213. Durrant, "Numerical Identity," *Mind* 82 (1973):95–103, at 95; quoting John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. John W. Yolton (J. M. Dent, 1961), p. 274: "Another occasion the mind often takes of comparing is the very being of things, when, considering anything as existing at any determined time and place, we compare it with itself existing at another time, and thereon form the *ideas* of *identity* and *diversity*. When we see anything to be in any place in any instant of time, we are sure (be it what it will) that it is that very thing, and not another which at that same time exists in another place, how like and undistinguishable soever it may be in all other respects; and in this consists *identity* when the *ideas* it is attributed to vary not at all from." See also Isaiah Berlin, "The Concept of Scientific History" in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), p. 24.
 214. Frank, "Germanic Legend." But see Davis, *Demise of Germanic Legend*.
 215. This is called the "bundle theory" of identity and was first proposed in the Middle Ages. See Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space, and Motion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), especially chapter 4; its proponents included Basil of Caesarea, Proclus, John Philoponus, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Duns Scotus.
 216. Importantly, I am *not* arguing that familial relations between individuals are imagined. Families obviously exist, and they are related to other families. To deny the importance of that is to invite the social philosophy of the Khmer Rouge, who saw the destruction of family and generational ties as a first step in social revolution. I am arguing that the constitution of a metaphorical family, which arises as individuals adopt the language of kin to speak about political entities, is induced by proposals of belonging in a loosely defined literary canon. Interpreting that canon must take into account a profoundly conservative tradition, as it is passed in families and in schools from generation to generation.
 217. Berlin, "Scientific History," p. 50.
 218. Pohl reports of the work of Reinhard Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram, "Wenskus and Wolfram have stressed the close connection between myths and norms, between *origo* and *religio/lex* within ethnic traditions Traditional norm systems (like the *leges*) may be seen as traces of ethnic practices"; Pohl, "Ethnic Names," pp. 8–9.
 219. Macdonald, "Identity Complexes," p. 6.
 220. For example, the laws of Ine (46.1); Thomas Charles-Edwards notes this in a discussion following Pohl's paper in Hines, *The Anglo-Saxons*, p. 34: Ine "contrasts *wilisc* with *englisc*." The Old English life of St. Guthlac relates that the Britons were "the enemy of the English people," and that the devils that besieged Guthlac spoke Celtic; Michael Swanton, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, 2nd ed. (London: Everyman, 1993), p. 99. The relevance of linguistic frontiers to ethnic identity is illustrated in Paul Meyvaert, "Rainaldus est malus scriptor Francigenus"—Voicing National Antipathy in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 66 (1991):743–63.
 221. The "Map of Anglo-Saxon Territories in the 7th/8th Centuries," in Hines, *The Anglo-Saxons*, n.p., typically sets the boundary between Anglo-Saxon and Celtic territories such that Lindsey (and Deira, for that matter) are not firmly differentiated from the territories of the Middle or East Angles.
 222. I take this distinction between formal and material from Aristotle, *De Anima*, 403a 29. See Michael Durrant, ed., *Aristotle's De Anima in Focus* (London: Routledge,

- 1993), pp. 5–6 and p. 18. In terms of Aristotle's distinction, I claim that ethnic identity is a formal principle; see 414a 4.
223. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986; Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 200–01; see also Pohl, *Germanen*, p. 7. For a similar view, see John D. Niles, "Appropriations: A Concept of Culture" in *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, eds. Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 202–228, at p. 220.
 224. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991). John D. Niles posits the "nationalist fallacy" in Old English criticism with respect to Anderson's work: "Myth and History" in *A Beowulf Handbook*, eds. Robert Bjork and John D. Niles (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), p. 231.
 225. See Taylor, *Sources*, chapters seven and eight. Rather than attune oneself to God, Who "presides over the cosmic order," and admit the incapacity of thought to grasp the order of the world, "The Cartesian option is to see rationality, or the power of thought, as a capacity we have to *construct* orders which meet the standards demanded by knowledge, or understanding, or certainty" (pp. 146–47).
 226. Smith, *Origins*, p. 37. Compare Wolfram, "Origo et religio," p. 36, who recognizes "all the prefabricated elements of tradition, which past authors reused to construct their texts."
 227. "*Ethnie* are nothing if not historical communities built up on shared memories"; Smith, *Origins*, p. 25. This view allows that the formal elements of identity may proceed from a desire to articulate the material elements of identity. It therefore offers what I consider a sound (and Aristotelian) relation between material and formal elements, a compromise position between the opposed views of Wolfram and Goffart.
 228. Anderson, *Communities*, p. 6.
 229. See Collingwood, *Idea of History*, p. 53, where he posits the core proposition of medieval historiography: "History, as the will of God, orders itself, and does not depend for its orderliness on the human agent's will to order it."
 230. Smith, *Origins*, pp. 14–15. See also Jurt, p. 4, who refers to Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La creation des identités nationales* (Paris, 1999), and her "Checkliste der symbolischen und materiellen Elemente, auf die man zurückgreift, um eine spezifische nationale Identität zu konstruieren: eine Geschichte..., eine Reihe von Helden..., eine Sprache, Kulturdenkmäler, Folklore," etc.
 231. In Wolfram, *Goths*, p. 4; his translation.
 232. Pohl, "Ethnic Names," p. 10.
 233. John Niles, "Myth and History" in Bjork and Niles, eds., *Beowulf Handbook*, pp. 213–232, p. 230.
 234. This list of tribes is not exhaustive. I do not deal with the Hwicce, Mægon-sætte, Wreocenssete, Pecsæte, or the Meonware, for example. See K.R. Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom: British Political Continuity, 300–800* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994); and Steven Bassett, ed., *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London: Leicester University Press, 1989).
 235. Roland Axtmann, "Society, Globalization and the Comparative Method" in Paul Dukes, ed., *Frontiers of European Culture* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), pp. 3–32, p. 3.

236. Generally, I follow Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, pp. 46–47: “In genauem Gegensatz zum Stammesbegriff der Romantik, der von allem Staatlich-Politischen absah und nur das Natürlich-Organische betonte, sah die Wanderzeit in der *gens* zugleich einen politischen Körper, einen *populus*, wenn auch der Begriff der *gens* vielfach mit *natio* variiert wird, die vor allem eine bloße Abstammungsgemeinschaft bedeutet. Jede *gens* ist eine *natio*, aber keinswegs jede *natio* eine *gens*. *Populus* ist vor allem—nach altrömischem Munster—das den Staat tragende Volk. Nach dem Quellen der Wanderzeit ist also die *gens* gleichzeitig *natio*, Abstammungsgemeinschaft, und *populus*, Staatsvolk.”
237. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone, 1992), p. 26.
238. Frantzen, *Desire*, p. 25. See also his “The Fragmentation of Cultural Studies and the Fragments of Anglo-Saxon England,” *Anglia* 114 (1996):310–39.
239. Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 8.
240. Isidore of Seville, *Sententiae*, I, xv, 2, in Jarislav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology(600–1300)* (University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 22. Alfred’s term and the description of early medieval Christian churches is from Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 8. For a general discussion of these localized pagan traditions, see Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick, *A History of Pagan Europe* (London: Routledge, 1995). On Eusebius, see Robert W.Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 28.
241. James C.Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (Oxford University Press, 1994). This phrase is not original to Russell; see D.H.Green, *The Carolingian Lord* (Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. x–xi. On monastic localization, see Catherine Cubitt, “Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England,” in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. William O.Frazer and Andrew Tyrell (Leicester University Press, 2000). Cubitt presented her paper at the International Medieval Congress, 5 May 1997, and I am grateful to her for allowing me to read a copy before it appeared in print.
242. Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 11–18.
243. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 12.
244. Taylor, *Sources*, p. 34 and p. 41. See, for example, Somers and Gibson, “Narrative and Social Identity,” p. 54, who describe the work of Carol Gilligan (*In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982]) as motivated by a belief in the social sciences that women were arrested at a lower stage of moral development than that attained by most men.
245. The term is traced to H.Munroe Chadwick in 1912 by Herwig Wolfram, “Germanic Tribes” in *Late Antiquity*, eds. G.W.Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1999), pp. 466–68, at p. 468. See also Pohl, “Ethnic Names,” p. 9. Pohl, with Wolfram, is one of the architects of the Vienna School of ethnogenesis. It is against this more formal school that Goffart voices his more material concerns.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ELECTION OF THE ANGLES

1. "I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations."
2. Roger D. Ray, "Bede's *Vera Lex Historiae*," *Speculum* 55 (1980):1–21. See also R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (1946; Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 52–56.
3. Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels*, trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1991), 2 vols., 1:1.
4. Roger D. Ray, "Bede, the Exegete, as Historian," in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirtieth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Gerald Bonner (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1976), p. 125. Ray speaks mainly to Bede's stylistic echoes of Scripture; my reading speaks in part to Bede's methodology. See also James Campbell, "Bede," in *Latin Historians*, ed. T.A. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966); and Peter Hunter Blair, "The Historical Writings of Bede," *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria*, eds. Michael Lapidge and Peter Hunter Blair (London: Variorum, 1984), pp. 197–221. Bede was also widely known as a poet; see Michael Lapidge, "Bede the Poet," in Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600–899* (London: Hambledon, 1996), pp. 313–38.
5. A sense of order which Arthur Holder has described admirably in Bede's work on holy architecture, for example. Arthur Holder, "Allegory and History in Bede's Interpretation of Sacred Architecture," *American Benedictine Review* 40 (1989):115–131, esp. 120.
6. Sometimes translated "English people," but "Anglian people" is more accurate; see my "Bede, Social Practice, and the Problem with Foreigners," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 13 (1995):97–109; Georges Tugene, *L'image de la nation anglaise dans l'Histoire Ecclesiastique de Bède le Venerable* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2001), pp. 18–26; Patrick Wormald, "Bede, the *Bretwaldas*, and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*" in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 99–129; Sarah Foot, "The Making of *Anglecynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996):25–49; Kathleen Davis, "National Writing in the Ninth Century: A Reminder for Postcolonial Thinking about the Nation," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28 (1998):611–37; Michael Richter, "Bede's *Angli*: Angles or English?" *Peritia* 3 (1984):99–114; and Susan Reynolds, "What Do We Mean by 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Anglo-Saxons'?" *Journal of British Studies* 24 (1985):395–414. In defining gens, I follow in part Herwig Wolfram, who claims that "during the Early Middle Ages the meaning of the term *gens* changed to such an extent that it came to embrace a wide spectrum of meanings, sometimes even contradictory ones"; Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tr. Thomas J. Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 5. Important is Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Köln: Böhlaus Verlag, 1961), pp. 46–47; see chapter one. This is further described by Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 15–40; and Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 7 ff. Michael Wallace-Hadrill

- sees *gens* as comprised of tribes: *The LongHaired Kings* (University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 156. I am cautioned in my definition of *gens* by conversations with Walter Goffart of Yale, for which am am grateful.
7. Bede, *Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings*, cap. 6, in *Bede: A Biblical Miscelany*, eds. and trans. W.Trent Foley and Arthur G.Holder (Liverpool University Press, 1999), pp. 81–143, p. 100–01. Ælfric makes the same point, “He says, ‘Our Father’ In that is revealed how greatly God loves unity and concord among His people. According to God’s book all Christian men should be united as if they were one man; therefore, woe to the man who breaks that unity apart”; *Hom XIX*, ed. and trans. B.Thorpe, *The Sermones Catholici or Homilies of Ælfric*, 2 vols. (London, 1844–46), 1, p. 276.
 8. “Praefatio,” *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, eds. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B.Mynors (1969; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 2; their translations unless otherwise noted.
 9. See above, and R.G.Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. Jan van der Dussen (1946; Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 53: “The great task of medieval historiography was the task of discovering and expounding this objective or divine plan.” Similarly, Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 7.
 10. For example, D.W.Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton University Press, 1962), which was thought by many critics unreasonably exegetical. See, for example, Derek Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales* (London: Routledge, 1985), pp. 32, 83–84, and 98, where he is sharply dismissive of Robertson, calling him oversimple and forceful. For a judicious corrective to extreme positions, see David L.Jeffrey, “The Self and the Book: Reference and Recognition in Medieval Thought,” in *By Things Seen: Reference and Recognition in Medieval Thought*, ed. David L.Jeffrey (University of Ottawa, 1979), pp. 1–17.
 11. For example, G.F.Browne, “The Homilies of Bede,” in *The Venerable Bede* (London: E. & J.B.Young, 1887), pp. 127–47. Browne comments on “the somewhat far-fetched figurative interpretation in which he constantly indulges his imagination.” See Bertram Colgrave, “Bede’s Miracle Stories” in *Bede: His Life, Times, and Writings*, ed. A.Hamilton Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), pp. 201–229, p. 201.
 12. *Ante-Nicean Fathers*, cap.5, ch. 31.
 13. Robert A.Markus, “History,” *Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D.Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 432–35, at p. 433.
 14. CCSL 119A, Lib. II, p. 310. Note the Latin *cura*, implying the pastoral role of textual interpretation. I am distinguishing here between historical narratives and chronicles, although even chronicles show a degree of literary affect; see Thomas A.Bredehoft, *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (University of Toronto Press, 2001).
 15. Bede, “On Tobias,” in Foley and. Holder, pp. 57–79, at p. 61: “Through all its learned and chosen men that same people [Israel]...applied itself to seeking God’s forgiveness so as to gain eternal life.”
 16. Bede writes, “To his [Gregory’s] works of piety and justice, this also belongs, that he snatched our race[s] from the teeth of the ancient foe and made them partakers of everlasting freedom by sending us preachers” (Colgrave trans., II, i, p. 131). According to Gregory, he himself had already undertaken the conversion of the

- people of Britain before the mission of Augustine to Canterbury. He says in about 595 in his *Moralia in Job* (§ 27.11) that the Christianization of Britain was “well under way”; see Ian Wood, “The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English” *Speculum* 69 (1994):1–17, at 2. On pre-Anglian British Christianity, see Lucas Quensel-von Kalben, “The British Church and the Emergence of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms,” *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 10 (1999):89–97.
17. II, i, p. 132; Colgrave’s translation. *Tam sedula* is also “such diligence.”
 18. This relationship is described by David Kramer, “On the Relation of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah,” *Journal of the Study of the Old Testament* 59 (1993): 73–92, esp. 91. Boethius connects *gens* and election in his *Confessio Fidei*, “electa est una gens, in qua Dei mandata clarescent,” *Patrologia Latina* (hereafter *PL*) 64:1336B. Similarly Bede, *In primam partem Samuhelis*, III, xxi and IV, xxix; CCSL119.
 19. Gregory sighs from the depth of his heart: “ex corde longa trahens suspiria.” For Gregory, “every act must be a sacrifice on the alter of the heart”; Carole Straw, “Gregory I” in *Augustine through the Ages*, pp. 402–405, at p. 402. Bede also uses this same image in his commentary on Habakkuk to describe Habakkuk’s reaction to suffering and injustice in the world; CCSL 119B, p. 381.
 20. Colgrave’s translation. The allusion of “fellow-heirs” is to Paul’s letter to the Colossians 1:12.
 21. Ramier Pineas, “John Bale’s Nondramatic Works of Religious Controversy,” *Studies in the Renaissance* (1962):218–233, at 226; and Allen J.Frantzen, “Bede and Bawdy Bale: Gregory the Great, Angles and the Angli,” *AngloSaxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, eds. Allen J.Frantzen and John Niles (University of Florida, 1998), pp. 17–39. John Bale, *The First Two Partes of the Acts or Unchast Examples of the English Votaryes...* (London, 1551); the story of Gregory appears at C6v. Frantzen points out that the comparison of the boys to angels in this story is meant to suggest the “angellike state of their descendents”; Frantzen, *Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from Beowulf to Angels in America* (University of Chicago Press 1998), p. 268.
 22. Pineas, “John Bale,” 226.
 23. For example, Ian Wood, “Mission,” p. 2, says the puns are “literary devices” used to “popularize the story.” Frantzen remarks that the Angles’ angelic beauty has been largely ignored by commentators on the story, perhaps because of its sexual overtones; “Bawdy Bale,” p. 21.
 24. See Allen J.Frantzen, *King Alfred* (Boston: Twayne, 1986).
 25. For example, Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. Lindsay (London, 1911): “Venustus, pulcher, a venis, id est sanguine.” Medieval aesthetics and the notion of angelic beauty are described by Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (Yale University Press, 1986); see also John of Damascus, “On Holy Images,” *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, trans. S.D.F.Salmon (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), *Nicean and Post-Nicean Fathers* 9, p. 88. The Norman historian Orderic Vitalis attributes *pulcher* “to the highly born of all races, but it was often emphasized when he wrote of the English”; Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman nights* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1984), pp. 11–12.
 26. Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, ed. B.Krusch and W.Levison (Hanover, 1920); *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (hereafter *MGH*) ss. rer. Merov. 7, c. 24, p. 134: “Fuit enim vir sanctus omni dignitate praecularus, statura decens, vultu honorabilis, faciae

- venustus, corde laetur, consilio sapiens, ore iucundrus, moribus conpositus, in omne opere Dei strenuus.”
27. See Bede, *In Samuhel*, II, x, CCSL 119: “Pulcherrime autem dicitur quia qui ambulavit in hac vita prius cum deo obediendo praeceptus eius, ambuavit postmodum cum illo transeundo de hac vita in aliam, ubi in maxima carnis et spiritus quiete et felicitate viveret.” Similarly, the beauty of the Anglian boys moves Gregory to spiritual contemplation and a desire to bring the Angles into the joyful life of the Church.
 28. *Homeliarium evangelii*, I, hom. x, CCSL 122.
 29. Compare Bede’s commentary on the temptation of Eve: *In principium Genesis*, I, iii (11. 1950 ff.), CCSL 118A. Rachel literally means “seeing God” (and also “sheep,” a connection commentators on Canticles will raise); Jerome, *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum*, CCSL 72, p. 138; noted by Bede in his homily on Matthew 2:13, *Homilies on the Gospels*, trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst, 2 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1991), pp. 96–102, p. 97.
 30. PL 90:254D, “Cogitationes enim mortalium timidae: spes vero contemplationis Dei habens scientiam, ipsa est Rachel, unde dicuntur pulchra speciae.” Bede says similarly in *De Templo*, “Dixemus de cedro quod insuperabilem virtutum venustatem signaret,” CCSL 119A, lib. 1. Bede included this image of Rachel in his poem on the six days of creation: CCSL 122, II, vii, i. Isidore of Seville explains that *pulcher* is that which is beautiful in and of itself, not for the sake of something else; *Sententiarium Libri*, I, viii, 8 (PL 83:551–2). Similarly, see Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, trans. D.W. Robertson (New York: MacMillan, 1958), I, xxii, p. 18; and John Cassian, *The Conferences*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (New York: Newman, 1997), XXI, xvi, 1, p. 732.
 31. Alcuin, *Vita II Vedastis episcopi Atrebatensis*, MGH ss. rer. Merov. 3, cap. 9, p. 423; and *Vita Richarii*, MGH ss. rer. Merov. 4, cap. 14, p. 401.
 32. MGH Epp. sel. 1, Epist. 9, p. 5: “vere pulchritudinis venustatem adquirere, id est divinarum sapientiam, quae est splendor auro, speciosior argento, ignitior carbunculo, candidior cristallo”
 33. Bede writes, “Pulcherrime autem dicitur quia qui ambulavit in hac vita prius cum deo obediendo praeceptus eius...”; *In principium Genesis*, CCSL 118A, II, v. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, whose neo-Platonism was of tremendous influence on Gregory, writes in his *Divine Nantes* that there exists a “Superessential Beauty” which “is the cause and harmony and splendour in all things, flashing forth upon them all, like a light”; cited in Eco, *Art and Beauty*, p. 18; on the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius on Gregory, see Joan M. Petersen, “‘Homo Omnis Latinus’: The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great,” *Speculum* 62 (1987):529–51.
 34. Bertam Colgrave, trans., *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge University Press, 1968). The Whitby version was written at Steoneshealh in Northumbria; Wood, “Mission,” p. 2.
 35. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin, 1961), p. 50. The phrase “luminosa veritas tua” is found at II, vi.
 36. One wonders whether hearing this passage read aloud, a listener might imagine himself for a moment to have heard, not *forma egregia*, but *formae* Greg[or]i, or in the Gregorian form, perhaps fleetingly implying the propriety of Bede’s Anglian

- monastic tonsure over the disparaged Irish and British tonsure of Bede's Celtic neighbors.
37. Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, V, xiv. Whitby uses *crinis*, suggesting long hair like a comet's tail, and which tended to describe hair effeminately.
 38. The proximity of *columba* and *gregria* in this passage invites allusion, though coincidentally, given that Columba and Gregory are the ideological apostles to the Northumbrians. See Ludwig Bieler, "Ireland's Contribution to the Culture of Northumbria," in *Famulus Christi*, pp. 210–28. With respect to the pastoral imagery here, note also that Rachel can mean "sheep," as Bede points out in his homily on Matthew. 2:13–23. Bugga, daughter of King Centwine of Essex (676 A.D.–685 A.D.), was also pleasantly associated with *greges* and with the term *egregia*; see Andy Orchard, "After Aldhelm: The Teaching and Transmission of the Anglo-Latin Hexameter," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992):96–133, at 98 (lines 4 and 14).
 39. In *Canticum canticorum expositio*, CCSL 19, lib. 6. This work was sometimes attributed to Jerome under the title *Veri amoris* (p. xxviii). A manuscript copy, Gneuss no. 802, was in England at the beginning of the eighth century, during which Bede was writing the *HE*; it was produced possibly in Mercia. Nevertheless, the interpretation is typical. A compilation of commentaries on Canticles is listed among the books donated by Æthelwold to Peterborough in the late tenth century; item 14 in Michael Lapidge, "Surviving Booklists from AngloSaxon England," *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. Mary P. Richards (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 87–168, at pp. 118–19.
 40. *Canticum canticorum*, lib. viii and lib. vi.
 41. See Jarislav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 278–331.
 42. Augustine, "On Free Will," in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, ed. J.H.S. Burleigh (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 102–217, at pp. 171–72. Augustine describes the movement away from the anger of God as a movement of the soul from perturbation to tranquility: in *Iohannis evangelium tractatus*, CCSL 36, tract. 124. See also Gregory, *Moralia in job*, XXXI.45, CCSL 143B.
 43. Augustine, *Quaestionum in heptateuchum libri septem*, CCSL 33, Quaest. ludicum 13. See also Psalm 6 and its commentary tradition.
 44. Thus Bede's Commentary on Ezra 2:65: "each one of the elect should sing a song of praise and confession," trans. Scott DieGregorio, unpublished. See also *HE* II, i, p. 130, which immediately precedes this story.
 45. II, i, p. 130; my trans.
 46. See R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 48. Markus records Gregory's statement in his *Moralia in Job*, XI.4.6: Created things "proclaim by the form they manifest their creator: [this is] as it were the voice of their confession." See also Pelikan, *Catholic Tradition*, p. 294 and p. 298.
 47. Bede, "On Tobias," p. 79; Augustine *Enchiridion*, *Nicean Fathers* 9.29.
 48. Foley and Holder, "On Tobias," *Bib. Misc.*, pp. 78–79. Notably, the number of nations in the world is set after the number of angels; see especially Deuteronomy 32:8, but also Exodus 14:19, Baruch 6:6, Dan 10:13 and 21, and Ecclesiasticus 17: 17 (Sir 17:14 in the Vulgate); Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo* in *St. Anselm: Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. S.N. Deane (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1962) I, xvi, p. 235; and Wesley Carr, *Angels and Prindpalities* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 32.

49. This corresponds to similar ethnic ambiguity effected by Alfred's program of translation; see chapter three.
50. The term "frumcyn" or "fromcyn" is also used to describe Adam's descendents ("Gospel of Nicodemus," Cambrige Corpus Christi College Ms. 41, ed. W.H. Hulme, "The Old English Gospel of Nicodemus," *Modern Philology* 1 [1903]: 579–614) and Christ's genealogy (Ælfric, "Sermon on Christmas," 30.5, ed. Peter Clemoes, EETS ss. 17).
51. Kenneth R. Brooks, ed. *Andreas and the Fates of the Apostles* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961).
52. Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book* (Columbia University Press, 1936), ASPR 3, pp. 149–53; and Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (University of Toronto, 2001), p. 52.
53. *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. E.V. Gordon (London: Methuen, 1968).
54. A.S. Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses* (Oxford, 1900), no. 299.18; see also Lindelöf (1907–14), ed., *Lambeth Psalter* 44.5; A.N. Doane, ed., *Genesis A* (University of Wisconsin, 1978), l. 899; and Quinn, ed. *Latin-Old English Glossaries* (1956), pp. 69–219, CIGl 3 413.
55. L. Goossens, ed. *The Old English Glosses of MS Brussels, Royal Library 1650* (Brussels, 1974), ll. 1103 and 4663. Aldhelm has been called the most important figure of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Latin literature; Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).
56. S.S. Getty, "An Edition with Commentary of the Latin/Anglo-Saxon *Liber scintillarum*" (University of Pennsylvania dissertation, 1969), 53.5 [hereafter LibSc]; dated by Gneuss, no. 470, following Ker, no. 256. See also 53.3: "Basilius dixit pulchritudo diligenda est fili qui letitiam spiritualement consuevit infundere evitemus perniciosas pulchritudines ne omnium malorum genera in nos inrogentur"; this is glossed, "[Basil] sæde fægernyss to lufigenne ys la bearn se þe blisse gastlice gewunap onasendan utan forbugan cwyldbære fægernysse þæt na ealra yfela cynrenu on us bon ongebrohte."
57. LibSc, 58.39: "Gregorius dixit terrena pulchritudo confiditur id est perturbatur cum celsitudo cælestis aperitur," glossed, "[Gregorius] sæde eordlic fægernysse byð gedrefed þænne hyhð heofonlic byð openud."
58. *Prognostication Glosses* 2 (Förster, 1910), 274; see also 276.
59. Harvey W. Chapman, *An Index to the Old English Glosses of the Durham Hymnarium* in Fred C. Robinson, *Word-Indices to Old English Non-Poetic Texts* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1974) pp. 117–210, at p. 190. Alcuin had an Anglo-Saxon student, Hwita, also known as Candidus; see Michael Lapidge, "Anglo-Latin Literature," in his *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (London: Hambledon, 1996), pp. 1–35, at p. 24.
60. *Antiphon Glosses* 4, 1180; ed. L. Kindschi, "The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus MS 32 and British Museum MS Additional 32246" (Stanford University dissertation, 1955).
61. I translate "ofermod" as insolent following a gloss on Prudentius, "insolens ofermod." H.D. Meritt, *The Old English Prudentius Glosses at Boulogne-sur-Mer* (Stanford University dissertation, 1959), l. 236; and Aldhelm, *De virginitate* (prose), ed. Napier 1900, no. 1.
62. Ælfric, *Homily on Palm Sunday* (Godden, 1979, EETS ss. 5), p. 137, l. 6.
63. *Feria II in Letania maiore* (Godden, 1979), p. 184, l. 139.
64. London BL MS Cotton Julius A x (Katzor, 1981), vol. 2, p. 101.

65. Chapman, *Durham Hymnarium* based on the edition of Stevenson for the Surtees Society (1851, vol. 23). See also Ludwig Ettmüller, *Lexicon Anglo-Saxonicum ex poetarum scriptorumque prosaicorum operibus* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1851; rpt. Rodopi, 1968), p. 15. Stryker, "The Latin-Old English Glossary in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A. III" (Stanford University dissertation, 1951), nos. 1079 and 1524; Wright and Wülcker, *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1884), no. 3.2; and Quinn, "The Minor Latin-Old English Glossaries in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A. III" (Stanford University dissertation, 1956), no. 154.
66. OLD. *Coma* can mean a silk thread, as Cassiodorus uses it; see Alexander Souter, *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949; rpt. 1996). It can also be broadened to describe any phenomenon resembling hair, such as a wisp of cloud (OLD, s.v.). See also Klaus Grübner, *Vocabularius Ex Quo: Überlieferungsgeschichte Ausgabe* (Tübingen: Max Niermeyer, 1984), 6 vols., 2: 568.
67. Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, pp. 156–57.
68. Katherine Fischer Drew, trans. *The Burgundian Code* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), section 33.1 at p. 45, and section 92 at p. 82; attribution to Gundobad, p. 5.
69. *Burgundian Code*, sections 5.4 and 5.5; *Laws of Alfred and Ine*, ed. Lieberman, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903–16), no. 45; and Æthelbert 33, in *English Historical Documents*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), p. 359 (hereafter *EHD*). Alfred Bammesberger proposes an emendation to *Beowulf* based on this law; see his "Further Thoughts on *Beowulf*, line 1537a..." *Notes & Queries* 48 (2001):3–4.
70. On the subject of tonsure in this letter, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p. 197.
71. It seems as if changes were made to an earlier version of the *libellus*, and there is a concern over whether it is all Gregory's work. Bede had it as early as 721, as Mynors points out: I, xxvi, p. 79, n. 4. An excellent survey of relevant work and an important argument on the implications offered by Alfred's version is by Sharon Rowley, "Shifting Contexts: Reading Gregory the Great's *Libellus Responsonunt* in Book III of the Old English Bede," in *Rome and the North: The Early Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe*, eds. Rolf H. Bremmer et al. (Paris: Peeters, 2001), pp. 83–92.
72. A manuscript was in Northumbrian in the seventh century; Gneuss, no. 773.5.
73. IV, xi; and Bede reproduces in full the decisions of the Ecclesiastical Synod of 673 (IV, v).
74. V, vii: "Scritpum est ergo hoc modo." There are two versions: see Wallace-Hadrill, *Commentary*, p. 179.
75. For an example of a quote, see V, vi, using "inquit"; or V, iv, using "dicens." See also the Caedmon story at IV, xxiv, which is reported, not word-for-word, but according to its sense, "quorum iste est sensus" (p. 416).
76. Paul Meyvaert, "Bede, Cassiodorus, and the Codex Amiatinus," *Speculum* 71 (1996): 827–83; and Foley and Holder, *Bib Misc.*, p. 102, n. 3.
77. CCSL 119a, p. 249 (L 814). Bede treats this portion of Levi as a tribe with special priestly status. There are also priests, *sacerdotes*, and scatterlings of the remaining nine tribes. Intriguingly, the priests, although set off as such, are not yet installed as

such, but must await the building of the temple—they are, at best, predisposed towards priesthood. Levi may have been a “fictitious tribe of priests”; see Ulrich Schorn, *Ruben und das Sytem der zwölf Stämme Israels* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), p. 92. In his commentary on Ezra 2:70, Bede writes that the ten tribes were once called Israel, and two called Judah, but all are descended from the same origin (*originem ducentes*), and are all properly Israel. This distinction forms the basis of my reading of *The Battle of Maldon*, below.

78. CCSL 119a, p. 256.
79. Paul Mayvaert, “Bede, Cassiodorus”; and Richard Marsden, “*Manus Bedae*: Bede’s contribution to Ceolfrith’s Bibles,” *ASE* 27 (1998):65–86.
80. “quæ figura est manifestissima status nostri” (CCSL 119b, l. 629); trans. Sean Connolly, *Bede: On Tobit and on the Canticle of Habakkuk* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997).
81. *Populus*, though, is inflected with a class distinction, and it seems Bede distinguishes between the aristocracy responsible for general salvation, and the common folk. See W.Trent Foley’s discussion of Bede, *Thirty Questions*, p. 95, n. 3.
82. This reestablishment of religious order is an important theme in the *libellus*, and may direct its repositioning in the Old English translation. See Rowley, “*Libellus*,” p. 90.
83. Gregory’s overarching theme here, as Paul Mayvaert has pointed out, is unity in diversity.
84. See *Thirty Questions on Kings*, Foley and Holder, p. 137: “Isreal serves the Philistines or Chaldeans whenever any of the faithful who stand nominally inside the chruch but are deceived by unclean spirits or humans bow the necks of their conscience to...sin”; and Rowley, “*Libellus*,” p. 91.
85. E.Gordon Whately, “Acta Sanctorum” in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*, eds. Frederick M.Biggs et al. (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2001), pp. 62–64.
86. See Bede, *In Sam*, I, ii, 36 (CCSL 119:33, 931–3), noted by Foley in *Thirty Questions on Kings*, Foley and Holder, p. 93, with respect to 1 Sam 2:36. They note that Bede cites 1 Peter 2:9, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood.”
87. Bede’s phrase recalls Boethius, who writes that “gens,” like “tribus,” is a collective assignation for “multi homines” (in *Liber de unitate et uno*, PL 63.1078B). The phrase in Bede alerts us to the fact that this multitude has not been nor will it be identified racially or politically.
88. Muriel Whitaker, “River of Life” in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 667.
89. R.G.Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. Jan van der Dussen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), p. 49. James and John typologically left their goods and their family and followed Christ; Matthew 4:22 and Mark 1:19–20.
90. Bede, *De temporum ratione*, lxvi, l. 1580 and 1746.
91. See also the *Glossarium Media et Infimæ Latinitatis* (Niort: Leopold Favre, 1883) and Du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediæ et infimæ latinitatis* (1678; Graz, AU: Akademische Druck, 1954), neither of which offer an entry for “Anglis,” but define “Anglia” as “Anglorum terra,” land of the Angles. With respect to race, Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, p. 73, translate Bede’s “gente Franconum” as “Frankish race” twice and, p. 55, “Romanæ gentis” as “of the Roman race.” But, as Walter Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 236, n.7, points out, Colgrave’s is a “not-altogether-reliable translation.” See also Rabanus Maurus who employs “gens” to speak of the tribes of Israel—for example, in *Commentariorum in Genesim* (PL 107.506D) and

- Commentaria in Exodum* (PL 108.12B and 108.49A). Bede makes the explicit association between a *gens* and a tribe in, among other places, his *Commentariorum in Genesim*, see III, x, l. 349, and III, xi, l. 375.
92. See also Myres, *Roman Britain*, p. 337, n. 1.
 93. 1 Corinthians 5:1, "Omnia auditur inter vos fornicatio, et talis fornicatio, qualis nec inter Gentes, ita ut uxorum patris sui aliquis habeat" ("I have been told as an undoubted fact that one of you is living with his father's wife. This is a case of sexual immorality among you that must be unparalleled even among pagans," Jerusalem Bible trans.). See also Matthew 6:32, 10:5, 10:18, 12:18, 12:21, and 28:19; Mark 10:33 (refers to the pagans who will kill Jesus), 10:42, and 13:10; and Luke 2:32.
 94. See especially Mark 1:1 for the generations of Jesus. For commentary on this use, see Bede, *In principium Genesis*, especially with regard to the "*gens israhelitica*" (CCSL 118a, I, ii, l. 1137) and "*gens iudea*" (CCSL 118a, II, iv, ll. 413 and 424; II, ix, l. 2325). See also Rabanus Maurus, *Commentariorum in Genesim*, PL 107:469D and 506D; and *Commentaria in Exodum*, PL 108:12B and 49A. See also Boethius, *Confessio Fidei*, PL 64:1336B, which notes that "*electa est una gens, in qua Dei mandata clarescerent*" Isidore of Seville says, "*Gens autem appellata propter generationes familiarum, id est gignendo, sicut natio a nascendo.*" See his *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), IX, ii. Isidore also notes the semantic association between a *gens* and language, IX, i. See Alexander Souter, *A Glossary of Later Latin*, p. 160. See also W.-H. Maigne D'Arnis, *Lexicon Manuale ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis...* (Paris, 1890); and Du Cange, *Glossarium*.
 95. John Mitchell Kemble, *The Saxons in England: A History of the English Commonwealth till the Period of the Norman Conquest*, 2 vols. (1848; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1876). J.N.L. Myers sifts the evidence in "The Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 56 (1970):145–74. See also D.P. Kirby, "Bede's Native Sources for the *Historia Ecclesiastica*" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 48 (1965–66):341–71.
 96. R.G. Collingwood and J.N.L. Myers, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949), p. 337.
 97. Peter Hunter Blair, *Anglo-Saxon England: An Introduction* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1996) and his *Roman Britain and Early England, 55 B.C.-A.D. 871* (1956; New York: W.W. Norton, 1963).
 98. Richard Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement: Archaeology and the Beginnings of English Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 12.
 99. Patrick Sims-Williams, "The Settlement of England in Bede and the *Chronicle*" *Anglo-Saxon England* 12 (1983):1–41, 5.
 100. David Dumville, "Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend," *History* 62 (1977): 173–92, 192. ;
 101. See James Campbell, "Bede," in *Latin Historians*, ed. T.A. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 159–90; and both "Bede I" and "Bede II" in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London: Hambledon, 1986). See also Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to England* (New York: Schocken, 1972), pp. 42–50.
 102. See Sims-Williams, "Settlement," 4. For Schoebe and a précis of Bede scholarship up to 1982, see Jan Davidse, "The Sense of History in the Works of the Venerable Bede," *Studi Medievali* 23 (1982):647–95. See also Roger Ray, "Bede, the Exegete,

- as Historian,” in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Gerald Bonner (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1976), pp. 125–40; and his “Bede’s *Vera Lex Historia*” *Speculum* 55 (1980):1–21. More generally, see Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).
103. See R.A. Markus, “Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography” and “Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy,” both in his collected essays, *From Augustine to Gregory the Great* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1983). See also Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton University Press, 1988), especially chapter four. For Bede’s own explanation of missionary ideals, see his letter to Egbert in EHD, pp. 735–45.
 104. Patrick Wormald, “Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*,” in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 99–129, p. 105. The evidence amounts to three items: 1) “Bede’s passage on the death of Aethelbert of Kent,” 2) “the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*’s annal for 827 (*recte* 829),” and 3) the Ismere Diploma. For views which, on the contrary, describe the pre-covenant unity of the Anglo-Saxons, see Michael Richter, “Bede’s *Angli*: Angles or English?” *Peritia* 3 (1984):99–114; and Susan Reynolds, “What Do We Mean by ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘Anglo-Saxons’?” *Journal of British Studies* 24 (1985): 395–414.
 105. Steven Fanning, “Bede, *Imperium*, and the *Bretwaldas*,” *Speculum* 66 (1991): 1–26, at 20.
 106. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 22.
 107. The six features are 1) a collective name, 2) a common myth of descent, 3) a shared history, 4) a distinctive shared culture, 5) an association with a specific territory, and 6) a sense of solidarity. See Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, pp. 21–31. See also Patrick Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford University Press, 1988), especially pp. 53–56.
 108. J.N. Stephens, “Bede’s Ecclesiastical History,” *History: The Journal of the Historical Association* 62 (1977):1–14, at 1.
 109. Stephens, “History,” 4.
 110. Stephens, “History,” 12. For the history of the claim that Bede’s is solely an ecclesiastical history, see Stephens, n. 1, as well as Wilhelm Levison, “Bede as Historian,” in *Bede: His Life, Times, and Writings*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), pp. 111–51. See also Sir Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1943; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 187.
 111. Reynolds, “Anglo-Saxon,” 404.
 112. See Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (1970; Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 13: “In Bede’s sight it was not nationalism that gave unity to *Brittania*, but the fact that people who lived in the island all studied and professed the same knowledge of the sublime truth, in other words that its inhabitants were all Christians.”
 113. *HE*, p. xxxi. This is to say that Bede relies heavily on sources.
 114. David M. Gunn, “Saul,” in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 679–81, at p. 679.

115. Stephens, "History," 5.
116. Michael Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 181 and 65; and Wallace-Hadrill, "Bede and Plummer" in his *Commentary*, pp. xv–xxxv and p. xviii. See also Judith McClure, "Bede's Old Testament Kings," in Wormald, *Ideal and Reality*, pp. 76–98. She offers a debt in this regard to Wallace-Hadrill.
117. This is with reference to the *gens Anglorum*. Although there is much talk of Christianity, and some of the Briton's Christianity, Bede is writing a history specifically of the church among the *gens Anglorum*; see his *Præfatio*, *HE*, p. 2. Augustine declares the *gens Anglorum* to be converted in chapter twenty-seven. One might almost claim Stephens is not severe enough in his division: Bede's first *twenty-seven* chapters are about an explicitly pagan past, since the *gens Anglorum* ceases to be pagan only in chapter twenty-seven.
118. McClure, "Old Testament Kings," argues that Bede is paralleling the Book of Samuel, as his earlier comparison to Saul indicates. But Bede himself says that his book, like Scripture, is divided into five parts. The only section of Scripture explicitly and traditionally divided into five parts is the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. The Pentateuch is the history of the sons of Abraham and the *gens ludea*.
119. Wormald, "Bretwaldas," p. 125.
120. Bede, *Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine on the Letters of the Blessed Apostle Paul*, trans. David Hurst (Kalamzoo: Cistercian, 1999), no. 326, p. 244; from 25.2.2–3, in *CCSL* 38, pp. 142–143.
121. Eric John, "The Point of Woden," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 5 (1992):127–134. Georges Tugenes stresses the physical dimensions of *gens* in Bede, including territory; *L'image de la nation anglaise dans l'Histoire Ecclésiastique de Bède le Venerable* (Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2001), p. 18.
122. Henry Mayr-Harting, "Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800," *English Historical Review* 111 (1996):1113–1133, at 1127.
123. C.W.Jones, ed. *Liber Quatuor in Principium Genesis* in *CCSL* 118, p. 203.
124. Acts 13:16–17. Jerome's Vulgate version begins, "Viri fratres, filii generis Abraham" "The familial connection between Jesus and Abraham is made clear in Matthew 1: 1–16, which begins, "Liber generationis Jesu Christi filii David, filii Abraham." See also Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin Books, 1983), I, 7, and his Preface in which he notes that Christians are God's "adopted people."
125. See also H.E.J.Cowdrey, "Bede and the 'English People'," *Journal of Religious History* 11 (1981):501–523, 503–04: Cowdrey designates as English all those who are neither Pictish, British, or Celtic, consisting essentially of "a selfaware ethnic unity comprehending all the Germanic elements which had settled in Britain."
126. See Hodges, *Achievement*, p. 68, who claims that in the late seventh century, "there was an emergent awareness—perhaps little more—of being English." For evidence of the variety of tribes or communities in the fifth century beyond those considered Angles, Saxons, or Jutes, see D.P.Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991). For recent studies of kingdoms and their origins, see especially the introduction to Steven Bassett, ed., *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London: Leicester University Press, 1989). For an excellent discussion of "English" and the

- collective name, see Susan Reynold, "Anglo-Saxon," 395–414. Much of my own work here on "English" depends on hers.
127. Reynolds, "Anglo-Saxon," 398.
 128. For the contrary position, see Reynolds, "Anglo-Saxon," 402; and Richter, "Angles or English?"
 129. *HE*, p. 4. One cannot be certain whether this is a transhistorical description of a geopolitical or ethnic entity. Boniface, as Wilhelm Levison points out, "called his home country 'transmarina Saxonia,' but he also described himself as of the race of the Angles "See Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946), p. 92. See also Kirby, *Earliest English Kings*, p. 13.
 130. *HE*, p. 187.
 131. Leo Sherley-Price, trans., *Bede: Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (London: Penguin, 1955), p. 131.
 132. "Vortigern" is not in the Latin, but is assumed from "rege præfatio" and other narratives of the events. Vortigern's earliest appearance is in I, xiv. With respect to the precise date of the Saxon conquest, see Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), especially pp. 55–57. Howe argues that the dating is purposefully arbitrary. In this regard, see also J.N.L. Myers, *The English Settlements* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).
 133. The primacy of Canterbury in Bede's narrative is largely undisputed. Margaret Deanesly calls the *Historia* "substantially a Canterbury book." See her *The PreConquest Church in England* (Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 44.
 134. *HE*, I, xxiii: "Qui diuino admonitus instinctu anno xiiii eiusdem principis [Mauricius], aduentus uero *Anglorum* in Britanniam anno circiter cl, misit seruum Dei Augustinum et alios plures cum eo monachos timentes Dominum prædicare uerbum Dei *genti Anglorum*" (p. 68, my emphasis). Yet Augustine's mission was to Kent which Bede tells us is inhabited by *lutae*: "De lutum origine sunt Canuari...." p. 50. See also Bede's *De temporum ratione liber*, CCSL 123 B, lxvi, ll. 1762–64: "Idem missis Britanniam Augustino, Mellito, et Iohanne et aliis pluribus cum eis monachis timentibus Deum, ad Christum *Anglos* convertit" (my emphasis).
 135. Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 240.
 136. Wormald, "Bede," p. 101.
 137. See Reynolds, "Anglo-Saxon," 397–98. See also Paulus Baudrus, *Notæ in Librum de mortibus persecutorum*, PL 7:7660, "Britannia Gallica hoc nomen accepit circa annum Christi 460, cum Placidi Valentinani tepore, Rivalus Anglorum dominationem fugiens "The vast majority of early continental uses of "gens Anglorum" are citations from Bede or Gregory. Bede's *History* was considered a seminal document in matters concerning the English church. See, for example, the English Bishops' letter to Pope Leo III, PL 102:1033C1034A.
 138. These figures were compiled on the *Cetedoc Library of Christian Latin Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), which includes all of Bede's work available in the *Corpus Christianorum*, CSEL, PL, *Sources Chrétiennes*, and CCSL. Cetedoc lists 35 works, but does not include Bede's *HE*. For the *HE*, see Putnam Fennel Jones, *A Concordance to the Historia Ecclesiastica of Bede* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929).
 139. For such a reference to the Continental Angles, see *HE*, V, ix, pp. 476–77: "Quorum in Germania plurimas nouerat esse nationes, a quibus Angli vel Saxones, qui nunc Britanniam incolunt, genus et originem duxisse noscuntur."

140. See above, [chapter 1](#), on the syncopated middle term of “a crowd of Englishmen.”
141. *HE*, p. 2. Roger Ray translates more fluidly, “For if history relates good things of good men...,” “Vera Lex,” 20, as does Sherley-Price, p. 41.
142. With respect to this, see Howe’s *Migration*, especially pp. 5–7 and pp. 49–69; and Roger Ray, “Bede, the Exegete,” p. 129: “What mattered was the message of the narrative, not its details.”
143. Campbell, “Bede,” p. 183; Campbell is speaking generally about Bede’s historical method. Bede’s method, Campbell says, is “not only in the Eusebian tradition but also in that of hagiography,” p. 182.
144. The phrase is L.W.Barnard’s, “Bede and Eusebius as Church Historians,” in Bonner, *Famulus Christi*, pp. 106–124, who points out that objective history is an “invention of the nineteenth century,” p. 109. He also says, “Bede recounts what, in his opinion, ought to have happened,” p. 116.
145. “Duxit” is a third-person singular, the subject of which is “regium genus” and the object of which is “originem,” both in the singular. I have translated subject and object in the singular, although Colgrave and Mynors translate it in the plural. My reason is to stress Bede’s use of “gens,” which he uses to describe an aristocratic lineage of a single, elect people. I want also to suggest that there is in this sentence an implied difference between ethnic (“genus”) and political (“provincia”) origins. I translate “stirpe” as “lineage” to suggest the primacy of aristocratic ancestry in the determination of race. For example, “stirpe” is used by Boethius to describe the lineage of King David, that is, the House of David. See his *Confessio Fidei* (PL 64. 1336B), “Sub quo existitit beata Virgo Maria, quæ de Davidica stirpe pervenerat “In 1979, David Dumville noted that “Bede’s use of *stirpe* and *genus* requires further study for the elucidation of this passage.” I presume that Bede meant the two terms in a Scriptural sense. See David Dumville, “Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists,” *Early Medieval Kingship*, P.H.Sawyer and Ian Wood, eds. (University of Leeds, 1979), pp. 72–104, p. 78, n. 36.
146. Dumville, “Kingship,” p. 78. Dumville also explains that the genealogical pedigree “can be an expression of something wider than kingship...it can announce belief in the existence of a racial grouping,” p. 77.
147. This observation is made by Myres, *Roman Britain*, p. 336. He concludes that this sentence and the passage surrounding it are later insertions by Bede which have “broken the thread of his narrative, and confused its sense.” Hengist and Horsa, Myres also notes, are clearly the ancestors of the Angles. Nevertheless, he continues, “If...the three ethnological sentences are removed Hengist and Horsa become again the leaders of the Kentish *foederati* which Bede clearly took them to have been,” p. 337, n. 1. But the sentences are not removed, and they are, after all, Bede’s own.
148. Translation by J.H.Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1993). The Jerusalem Bible does not translate the last three phrases.
149. For example, *Annales Fuldensis*, an. 864, MGH SS rer. Germ. 7, p. 62; Ven. Fortunatus, *Carmna*, ix, 1, MGH Auct. Ant. 4, p. 203; Genesis 10:5, 20, 31. *Lingua gens* is a common phrase among medieval writers, as described below, including, for example, Augustine, *De quantitate animae*, III, CCSL 257, p. 72; and Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum Libri XX*, lib. ix, cap. 1. It is also, in its modern reflex, part of current United Nations definitions of an ethnic group; see the Austrian Bundeskanzleramt site <http://volksgruppen.orf.at> (viz. “Muttersprach”). Yiddish, for example, literally calls itself the mother tongue: מאמע לשון .

150. *Contra Celsus*, ANF v. 4, book 5, chapt. 30. See also Isidore, *Etymologiarum*, IX, xii.
151. Isidore, *Etymologiarum*, XX, ix, 4.
152. Isidore, *Etymologiarum*, XX, ix, 4.
153. This fact underlies the paradigm of Bede's narrative discussed in Howe: newcomers migrate across the sea and displace a people who have lost God's favor. Note also that the Picts are called "transmarinus" on the dubious geographical basis that the Firth of Forth and the mouth of the Humber form two seas, north of which the Picts reside; see Howe, *Migration*, p. 50. Howe also makes the point that for Gildas, the Saxons were outsiders, foreigners, but that for Bede, they were not, p. 46.
154. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 51.
155. Colgrave does not translate "ad aciem."
156. Colgrave writes "they returned home," although the pronoun clearly refers to the singular "army." He translates the enclitic "que" ("and") as "or."
157. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 52, n. 2, note that "domus" is in this sense a headquarters, a term also in Gildas. But see *De Excidio*, §14, where "domum" is translated by Winterbottom as "home," meaning the British home, not the military headquarters, of the troops of the expeditionary army of Maximus: *Gildas, The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, tr. and ed. Michael Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978), pp. 21 and 93. See also Genesis 12:1, "Dixit autem Dominus ad Abram: Egredere de terra tua, et de cognatione tua, et de domo patris tui, et veni in terram, quam monsrabo tibi" (my emphasis). Note also that "domus" can mean "one's native place" as Virgil uses it; *Chambers Murray Latin-English Dictionary*, eds. Sir William Smith and Sir John Lockwood (1933; Edinburgh and London: Chambers and John Murray, 1992), s.v.
158. Isidore, *Etymologiarum*, XX, ix, 4.
159. Hodges, *Achievement*, p. 66.
160. For Bede's idea of the *civitatis* see his "Retractatio" in *Exposition Actuum Apostolorum*, XXII, 28 in CCSL 121, p. 158. Henry Mayr-Harting says that Bede uses "civitas" to describe Roman towns occupied by Saxon settlers, *Coming of Christianity*, p. 30.
161. The phrase "in Pictorum parte" is translated by Colgrave and Mynors as "among the Picts." The phrase is collapsed into their translation of Bede's next sentence which includes the referential "inter eos," p. 19.
162. See also I, i (p. 16): "quinque gentium linguas," or five languages peculiar to five *gentes*, or races.
163. My translation. Colgrave, p. 21, translates "native land." But this begs the question, Who is native?
164. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 21, translate, "and so formed the third nation in Britain in addition to the Britons and the Picts," eliding the fact that *addiderunt* is a verb and that a *gens* is not a *natio*.
165. Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, pp. 14–16.
166. On the Germanic predilection for natural boundaries versus the Roman predilection for walls and other artificial boundaries, see Thomas S. Burns, *A History of the Ostrogoths* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1984). See also Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*. On Roman frontiers, see Hugh Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1996), esp. pp. 1–9. Note that here the Germans have the same lexical status as the Gauls, as *gens*.

167. Henry H. Howorth, "The Germans of Caesar," *The English Historical Review* 91 (1908):417–33, at 421.
168. See Matthew 7:28 in relation to an inner "turba." Matthew says here that "cum consummasset Jesus verba hæc, admirabantur turbæ super doctrina ejus."
169. For comments on the relation of Christianity to rivers and streams, see Gregory the Great, *Moralia in job*, CCSL 143, IX, xxxvi; XI, i; XII, vii; and especially XV, xvi and XX, iv.
170. This phrase is repeated from Book I, xv: "tota Nordanhymbrorum progenies, id est illarum gentium quæ ad boream Humbri fluminis inhabitant" ("all Northumbria's descendants, that is those races who live north of the River Humber"). The other two instances occur with reference to the Picts and British Irish, but intriguingly only after a mention of the warring (and to Bede's mind, preferable) Northumbrians. The first occurs in I, xxxiv—"Aedan rex Scottorum, qui Britanniam inhabitant" ("Aedan, king of the Irish who live in Britain")—and the second in V, xxi—"Naiton rex Pictorum, qui septentrionales Britanniae plagas inhabitant" ("Nechtán, king of the Picts who live in the northern regions of Britain"). See Jones, *Concordance*, s.v.
171. Colgrave and Mynors note that Bede may be following an Irish tradition which holds that the Picts came from Thrace, p. 17, n. 3. But see Jane Acombe Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf: A Study in the Geographical Mythology of the Middle Ages* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), in which Leake shows that Scythia was confused with Scanzia, an island which tradition held to be in the furthest northern reaches of Europe. This is born out by Bede's claim in his commentary on Kings that Scythia is in the northernmost reaches of the world; see Foley and Holder, *Thirty Questions*, p. 129.
172. See by comparison one of the three instances of *progenies* which occurs in Augustine's fourth question to Gregory: "Si debeant duo germani fratres singulas sorores accipere, quæ sunt ab illis longa progenie generatæ" (I, xxvii; p. 82). *Progenies* derives from the same root as *gigno*, *gignere* and expresses the result of childbirth, the child. With the proverbial *pro*, Augustine is emphasizing the offspring rather than just the fact of consanguinity. On the genealogical distinction between those of Anglian and those of Saxon ancestry, see Dumville, "Kingship," p. 78: "we must allow this division at least in general terms."
173. For a contrary argument, see Stephens, "History," and for the reception of this argument in medieval times, see R.H.C.Davis, "Bede After Bede," in Christopher Harper-Bill et al., eds., *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.Allen Brown* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1989).
174. Alcuin, *The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York*, tr. Peter Godman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), p. xlvii.

CHAPTER THREE: KING ALFRED'S CHRISTENDOM

1. "It is otherwise with the man who devotes his soul to reflecting on the Law of the Most High. He researches into the wisdom of all the Ancients, he occupies his time with the prophecies." This chapter could not have been completed without the guidance of Charles Wright and James Earl; my thanks to *JEGP* for permission to reprint this material.

2. As opposed to Orosius' original, the *Historia*. Alfred's authorship and the dating is discussed in Janet Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius*, EETS s.s. 6 (1980). See also her "King Alfred and the Old English Translation of Orosius," *Anglia* 88.4 (1970):433–60; and Elizabeth M.Liggins, "The Authorship of the Old English Orosius," *Anglia* 88.3 (1970):289–322, who concludes that the translator was neither Alfred, Wærferth, nor the translator of the OE Bede. The Latin edition is Carolus Zangemeister, ed., *Paulus Orosius: Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII Accedit Eiusdem Liber Apologeticus, Recensuit et commentario critico* (1882; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967). Page numbers of the Latin refer to Zangemeister; page numbers of the Old English refer to Bately. There is also an edition of inferior quality to Zangemeister: Paulus Orosius, *Historiarum libri septem*, PL 31:635–1174, which is nevertheless very useful as it is available electronically.
3. It is the "erste christliche Weltgeschichte," and its aims described clearly by Adolf Lippold, "Orosius, christlicher Apologet und Römischer Bürger," *Philologus* 113 (1969):92–105, p. 104–05.
4. T.Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 4 vols., EETS 95, 96, 110, 111 (1890–98); 95:12.
5. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B.Mynors, eds., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (1969; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 50.
6. Jane Acomb Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf: A Study in the Geographical Mythology of the Middle Ages* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), p. 106. I am greatly indebted to her description of the debate. On the phonological reflexes, see W.H.Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 166–70, noting Asser's attribution of Gothic race to Alfred's grandmother.
7. Herwig Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, tr. Thomas J. Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 29: "What this means is that he claimed for the Goths the entire history of the Getæ." See also, Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tr. Thomas J.Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 28. The Getæ of Greek history originated in Romania; see G.Ekholm, "The People of Northern Europe: The Getæ and the Dacians," *The Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge University Press, 1936), xi, 79. They are related to the Dacians and both are Thracian; see Albert Forbinger, *Hanbuch der Alten Geographie* (1877; Graz: Akademischer DruckUniv. Verlagsanstalt, 1966) iii., 756; and Stephanos Byzantinii, *E NIKON: A Geographical Lexicon on Ancient Cities, Peoples, Tribes and Toponyms* (Chicago: Ares, 1992), p. 216: "Δάχια ... Γέτας γαρ τοῦς τον Πόντον χειλιμένους καὶ τιν εἰς..."
8. Leake, *Geats*, p. 110.
9. N.F.S.Gruntvig, "Om Bjovulfs Drape eller det af Hr. Etatsraad Thorkelin 1815 udgivne angelsachsike Digt," *Danne-Virke, et Tids-Skrift* 2 (1817): 207–89, noted in Robert E.Bjork and Anita Obermeier, "Date, Provenance, Author, Audiences," in Robert E.Bjork and John D.Niles, eds., *A Beowulf Handbook* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 17.
10. Leake, *Geats*, p. 52. The impulse to trace the Geats historically is exemplified in R.T.Hampson, "An Essay on the Geography of King Alfred the Great..." appended to Rev. Joseph Bosworth, *King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of the Compendious History of the World by Orosius* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1859). The argument for the relation of the Geats to Gauts is summarized and

- reinvigorated in Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings* (Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 42–54.
11. Leake, *Geats*, p. 8. The tradition of mythographic geography is described by Natalia Lozovsky, “Carolingian Geographical Tradition: Was it Geography?” *Early Medieval Europe* 5 (1996):25–43. Lozovsky discusses a “discrepancy between the described world and contemporary reality,” 29, and the fact that “Carolingian geographers consciously put their work in the chain of written tradition,” 37.
 12. Leake, *Geats*, p. 15.
 13. Leake, *Geats*, p. 25.
 14. Leake, *Geats*, p. 27.
 15. Leake, *Geats*, p. 71. See also Jones, *Vikings*, pp. 25–33.
 16. Colgrave and Mynors, HE, p. 16: “gentem Pictorum de Scythia.” They claim, p. 17 n. 3, that Bede “is supposed to be confusing Scythia and Scandia, the Latin form of the Old English name for the southern part of the Scandanavian peninsula “But see J.M.Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 8: “At best it represents a tradition current among the Irish Jordanes, historian of the Goths, also confused Scythians with other peoples.”
 17. Leake, *Geats*, p. 73. But see Ekholm, “Peoples of Northern Europe,” p. 62, who corrects this to Götaland in southern Sweden, attesting to the previous opinion of Gotland; see also Wolfram, *Germanic Peoples*, p. 26.
 18. Leake, *Geats*, p. 121.
 19. Leake, *Geats*, p. 153.
 20. Roberta Frank, “Germanic Legend in Old English Literature” in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 88–106, p. 94.
 21. Wolfram, *Germanic Peoples*, pp. 26–27. This is described in the Alfredian Boethius, Bodley MS 180, in Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *Sweet’s Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, 15th ed. (1967; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 9–10: “Se eodoric wæs Amulinga; he was cristen, þeah he on þam Arrianiscan gedowlan þurhwunode.” See Frank, “Germanic Legend,” p. 95: “A pedigree going back to Geat apparently had propaganda value for English kings around 800, when the Carolingians were rediscovering their Gothic roots The expansion backward to Scyld [from Geat], eponymous ancestor of the Dansih Scyldings, marks what looks like a new social reality, the integration of Dane and Englishman in one kingdom.”
 22. Stevenson, *Asser*, p. 3: “Geata, quem Getam iamdudum pagaini pro deo venerabantur.” On the place of Geat in Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies, see p. 158, n. 2.
 23. Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332–489* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p.21.
 24. See Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (1972; University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1991), p. 220; and Kenneth Sisam, “Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 39 (1953):287–346. The role of the genealogy in authorizing a royal line, or *regia stirpe*, is argued by Eric John, “The Point of Woden,” *AngloSaxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 5 (1992):127–34. With respect to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the royal line of Cerdic, see Anton Scharer, “The Writing of History at King Alfred’s Court,” *Early Medieval Europe* 5 (1996): 177–206.

25. David Dumville, "Kingship, Genealogies, and Regnal Lists," in P.H.Sawyer and Ian Wook, eds., *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds: The editors, 1979), pp. 72–104, p. 77.
26. See Bede, *In Ezram et Nehemiah*, ed., D.Hurst, O.S.B., CCSL 119, pp. 235–392. Patristic opinion on this topic and on Ezra is collected in *Commentaria R.P.Cornelii a Lapide Societas Iesu...* (Antwerp: Jacob Meursium, 1664). With regard to regnal lists, a Lapide writes, "Tropologice liberato Christianorum ab Ethnicis oppressorum facta a Constantino, Theodosio, Carolo magno, &c.," p. 5.
27. Hermann Moisl, "Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies and Germanic Oral Tradition," *Journal of Medieval History* 7(1981):217–31, 227.
28. Anglian Genealogy, Rochester Cathedral, *Textus Roffensis* in T.Hearne, *Textus Roffensis* (Oxford, 1720), pp. 59–60. The *Textus Roffensis* was compiled in 1122–24 for Bishop Ernulf of Rochester. See Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1995), pp. 156–57.
29. Eric John, *Reassessing Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 56, writes instead that genealogies "were not literally believed." But see Dumville, "Kingship," especially his discussion of the political ramifications of extending Anglian genealogy to the ruling houses of Kent and Wessex. On the literal meaning of *gens*, see my Chapter One. The seriousness of genealogies can be ascertained by example from the Book of Ezra 2:62. James Campbell, ed. *The Anglo-Saxons* (London: Penguin, 1982), p. 67, notes that the East Anglians also traced their lineage back to Rome: "They seem to have taken this claim seriously; for Romulus and Remus appear on East Anglian coins, and on them alone."
30. West Saxon genealogy, Rochester Cathedral, *Textus Roffensis* in Hearne, *Textus Roffensis*, pp. 61–2.
31. BL MS Cotton Tiberius B V in T.Wright and J.O.Halliwell, *Reliquiae antiquae*, 2 vols. (London, 1841–43), 2:172–73. Compare *The Martyrdom of Ælfheah* in Whitelock, *Sweet's Reader*, p. 95, "Wæs a ræpling, se a ær wæs heafod Angelkynnes and Christendomes."
32. Antonette diPaolo Healy, et al., eds., *Dictionary of Old English* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, n.d.).
33. Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 8. The variations in political and religious sensibilities within Christendom are explored by Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
34. J.F.Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1976). See C.Du Fresne, Sieur Du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis*, ed. L.Favre (Niort, 1883–87); *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Munich, 1899–); and Alexander Souter, *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949).
35. J.R.Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1894; University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 75.
36. "Dedication of a Church," in Neil R.Ker, "Three Old English Texts in a Salisbury Pontifical, Cotton Tiberius C.I," in Peter Clemoes, ed., *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies... Presented to Bruce Dickens* (London, 1957), pp. 262–79, pp. 272–5, line 40.
37. Wulfstan, "In Cena Domini," in Dorothy Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 366–73 (App. I), line 65 ff.
38. Glosses to Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* in H.D.Meritt, *Old English Glosses: A Collection* (New York: MLA Monograph Series 13, 1945), no. 4. But

- see also London, British Library, MS. Arundel 155 in F.Holthausen, "Altenglische Intelinearversionen lateinischer Gebete und Beichten," *Anglia* 65 (1941): 230–54, no. 17; H.Logeman, *Die Heiligen Englands* (Hannover, 1889), pp. 115–120, no. 28, line 7 to end; and J.J.Campbell, "Prayers from MS. Arundel 155," *Anglia* 81 (1963): 82–117, prayer no. 37.1: "*omni populo cristiano eallum folce cristenum.*"
39. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 320; also called *Conf 10.2* (Ker, no. 58), ed. Hans Sauer, "Altenglische Beichtermahnungen aus den Handschriften CCCC 320 und Laud misc. 482: Edition und Kommentar," in *Anglo-Saxonica: Festschrift für Hans Schabram zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Klaus R. Grinda und Claus-Dieter Wetzel (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1993), pp. 21–51, p. 42. My thanks to Allen J.Frantzen for recommending this work.
 40. Bately, *Orosius*, I, viii, l.14; p. 27.
 41. V Æthelred, §1, in Liebermann, *Gesetze*, I.
 42. B.Thorpe, ed., *The Sermones Catholici or Homilies of Ælfric*, 2 vols. (London: Ælfric Society, 1844–6), I, p. 304, l. 23.
 43. *Dictionary of Old English*, p. 464.
 44. Sir William Smith and Sir John Lockwood, *Chambers Murray Latin-English Dictionary* (1933; Edinburgh: Chambers, 1992).
 45. Souter, *Glossary*. For example, Genesis 18:19, 18:25; Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 24: 22; Numbers 15:15; Numbers 27:4; Deuteronomy 1:17, 10:18, 17:8, 18:3, 22:28, 24: 17, 27:19, 32:41, and 33:21.
 46. Sarah Foot, "The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest," *TRHS* 6 (1996):25–49. Foot argues, "Through the promotion of the term *Angelcynn* to reflect the common identity of his people in a variety of texts dating from the latter part of his reign... King Alfred might be credited with the invention of the English as a political community," 25. See also Allen J.Frantzen, *King Alfred* (Boston: Twayne, 1986), p. 20, where he notes Alfred's "interest in using literature and writing to create and preserve social order and harmony."
 47. Bately, *Orosius*, pp. xxxix–liv. Ker dates three of the four extant manuscripts to the first half of the eleventh century. The fourth, British Museum Add. 47967, he dates to the first half of the tenth, and says is in the same Square AngloSaxon miniscule of the Parker Chronicle, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge 173. See Neil R.Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), nos. 133; 191, art. 1; 323; and 391. The arguments for an amanuensis are described in Batley, *Orosius*, pp. cix ff. See also Andrew Breeze, "A Celtic Etymology for Old English *Deor* 'Brave'" in Jane Roberts, Janet T.Nelson, and Malcolm Godden, eds., *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately on the Occasion of Her Sixty-fifth Birthday* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S.Brewer, 1997), pp. 1–4, who notes that the *Orosius* is "a text written down, apparently, from the dictation of a Cornishman." MSS: 1) British Library, Additional 47967, also known as the Lauderdale or Tollemache *Orosius*; 2) British Library, Cotton Tiberius B i; 3) the fragment Bodleian, Eng. Hist. e. 49; and 4) the fragment Vatican City, Reg. Lat. 497, f. 71. Dialect: Bately, *Orosius*, pp. xxxix–liv.
 48. Bately notes these as well as seventeen others which have some English connection. Gneuss, "Manuscripts," no. 32 and no. 820 are 1) Cambridge, Clare College 18; and 2) Düsseldorf, Staatsarchiv HS. Z. 4, Nr. 2. Bately's are numbered Gneuss 300, 370, 622, and 916. Durham Cathedral held a copy of *Orosius*, although whether that copy has been lost is unclear. See *Catalogi Veteres Librorum ecclesiae cathedralis dunelm*

- (London: J.B.Nichols and Son, 1838), an edition of a twelfth-century catalogue, MS B.iv.24 of the Dean and Chapter of Durham.
49. See Bately, "King Alfred and the Latin Mss of Orosius' History," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 22 (1961):69–105, esp. p.79 and pp. 103–105; and her "A Check List of Manuscripts of Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri Septem*" *Scriptorium* 15 (1961):329–34. The edition is Zangemeister's. Bately writes that "Alfred's exemplar was closer to the LD family of MSS than to P and R, and to D (and B) than to L," p. 103; for these families see Zangemeister, pp. vii–xxiii.
 50. Bately, "Latin Mss," p. 104.
 51. Bately, "Latin Mss," p. 85.
 52. Bately, "Latin Mss," p. 73. Further examples of discrepancies between the exemplar and the *World History* can be found in Bately, *Orosius*, p. 158, n. 9/1–2; p. 159, n. 9/6–10; p. 160, n. 9/16–17, n. 9/27, and n. 9/29–31; p. 161, n. 10/12, n. 10/14–15, and n. 10/18–20; etc.
 53. Janet Bately, "The relationship between geographical information in the Old English Orosius and Latin texts other than the Orosius," *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1976):45–62, p. 47.
 54. Bately, "Relationship," p. 52.
 55. *Historia*, I, prologue, p. 3. This dedication by Orosius to St. Augustine spells the matter out fairly clearly. All translations are from Raymond, Orosius, unless otherwise indicated.
 56. Raymond, *Orosius*, p. 13.
 57. Herwig Wolfram, *Germanic Peoples*, p. 38; quote from Procopius, *De bello Vandalico*, III, 2.25 ff.
 58. Bede *In Evangelium S. Lucae*, PL 92:329C. Walafrid Strabo, *Evangelium Secundum Lucam*, PL 114:243D, says instead, "Non omnia quæ assecutus, sed de omnibus quæ ad fidem legentium confirmandam credit idonea."
 59. Bede, *Homilæ subditiæ*, PL 94:334B–C, "Tempus quando nasceretur summæ pacis elegit, quia hæc nimirum ei nascendi in mundo causa fuit, ut genus humanum ad supernæ pacis dona reducarer." Bede's view became standard exegesis of Luke's chapter throughout the Middle Ages. See *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria: Facsimile reprint of the Editio Princeps: Adolf Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81* (Brepols: Turnhout, 1992), 4 vols., vol. 4, Luke 2:1–2. Again, the opening of the seventh book of the *Historia* recounts, "Postquam redemptor mundi, Dominus Iesus Christus, venit in terras et Caesaris censu civis Romanus adscriptus est, dum per duodecim, ut dixi, annos clausæ belli portæ beatissima pacis tranquillitate cohibentur," VII.1, pp. 437–38. The final phrase is taken from 1 Corinthians 10:4.
 60. Orosius, *Historia*, I.xvi.4; Zangemeister, p. 68. Raymond, *History*, pp. 64–65: "They [the Goths] who alone were feared by unconquered kingdoms offered now their services to protect the Roman Empire. Since in their blindness the pagans do not see that these things were brought to pass by Roman virtue, and won through the [Christian] faith of the Romans, they do not believe and are unwilling to acknowledge, though they realize it, that it was through the mediation of the Christian religion, which unites all peoples in the recognition of a common faith, that those barbarians became subject to the Romans without a conflict."
 61. See, for example, Benoit Lacroix, *Orose et ses idées* (Montreal: Institut d'Études Médiévales, 1965), p. 148: "les Romains ont obéi à César, mais en fait ils ont obéi à Dieu."

62. "Mihi autem prima qualiscumque motus perturbatione fugienti, quia de confugiendi statione securo, ubique patria, ubique lex et religio mea est."
63. "ac disserendi quippe Romanis ciuibus inter ciues Romanos esset tutas lebertas."
64. Lacroix, *Orose*, p. 149: "Nous croisons ici un theme important de la pensée patristique: la vocation messianique de Rome se poursuit dans son oeuvre d'évangélisation: Dieu a voulu que Rome demure comme il a voulu l'Eglise, en vue d'une diffusion plus rapide et plus efficace de la doctrine du Christ...."
65. Lacroix, *Orose*, p. 150: "le bonheur et la malheur de Rome dépendu de l'attitude qu'elle a prise a l'égard de l'Eglise du Christ."
66. "hinc, in quantum tranquille agitur mundus, credentium gratia, in quantum perniciose inquietatur, blasphemantium poena est"
67. Raymond Faral argues, for example, that the Franks were alert to this argument specifically from Orosius and thought themselves to be the inheritors "de la force et de la culture romaines, tout comme Rome avait hérité de la force de la culture helléniques"; *La légende arthurienne: études et documents*, 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Ancienne, 1929), 1:172.
68. A brief description is given by M.Cary, *A History of Rome down to the Reign of Constantine* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1960), pp. 771ff. The standard description remains A.H.M.Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey*, 2 vols. (1964; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
69. Batley, Orosius, p. 236.
70. 12.52.2 "Comon hi of þrim folcum am strangestan Germanie, þæt of Seaxum & of Angle & of Geatum. Of Geata fruman syndon Cantware, & Wihtsaetan; þæt is seo eod þe Wiht þæt ealond onearda . Of Seaxum, þæt is of am lande þe mon hate Ealdseaxan, coman Eastseaxan & Su seaxan & Westseaxan. And of Engle coman Eastengle & Middelengle & Myrce & eall Nordhembra cynn; is þæt land e Angulus is nemned, betwyh Geatum & Seaxum; is sæd of þære tide þe hi anon gewiton o to dæge, þæt hit weste wunige."
71. Bede, 3.14.1, "æt þa forman æfterfyligende Eadwines cyninges þone geleafan his agenre þeode besmiton: & Oswald se cristenesta cyning"
72. 11.19. Orosius, in a passage of terrible beauty, records the aftermath, "Exeuntibus Gallis remanserat in illo quondam Urbis ambitu informium ruinarum obscena congeries, et undique per impedita errantium et inter sua ignotorum offensae vocis imago respondens tepidos suspendebat auditus. Horror quatiebat animos, silentia ipsa terrebant: sisquidem materia pavoris est raritas in spatiosis. Hinc illis mutare sedes, aliud incolere oppidum, altero etiam censeri nomine cogitatum placitum atque temptatum est," Zangemeister, p. 131.
73. "Eft þa Gotan þær læssan hwile hergedan þæt hie for þæs cristendomes are & þurh Godes ege þæt hie naper ne þa burg ne bærndon ne þæs pone willan næfdon þæt hie heora noman hie benamon," II.8, p. 52.
74. R.G.Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (1946; Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 49.
75. Quoted and translated in David Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 149. The passage is from the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*. Rollason notes that Cuthbert's appearance in this text may derive ultimately from the practical need of the monks of Chester-le-Street to petition the West Saxons for help against the Scots and Vikings. But see Alfred P.Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 334–35, who notes that this

- is a late tenth-century tale from Durham, arguing that at that time “it was flattering for monastic communities to associate their patron saints with the great victory of Alfred over the Danes in 878”
76. Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, eds. and trans., *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (London: Penguin, 1983), pp. 182–186, p. 182.
 77. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred*, p. 101; Stevenson, *Asser*, p. 77. The translation is by Keynes and Lapidge.
 78. *Edward and Guthrum* (Prologue), ed. F.Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903–16), I, 128. This language is repeated in V Æthelred (V Æthelred: Liebermann, 1:1): “æt is þonne ærest, þæt we ealle ænne God lufian & weor ian & ænne Cristendom georne healdan & ælcne hæ endom mid ealle aweorpan; & þæt we habba ealle ægþer ge mid worde ge mid wedde gefæstnod, þæt we under anum cynedome ænne Cristendom healdan willa.” Stenton does not comment on the clause, ASE, pp. 260–62. A detailed study of the treaty is available from R.H.C. Davis, “Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier” in his *From Alfred the Great to Stephen* (London: Hambledon, 1991), pp. 47–54.
 79. See Henry Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 19: “Christendom not Europe was the general conception behind advanced political thought.”
 80. Smyth, *Alfred*, p. 84. For Asser, see William Henry Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, rev. Dorothy Whitelock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959; rpt. Sandpiper Books, 1998), p. 76, \$ 91; p. 49, \$ 64; etc.
 81. Keynes and Lapidge, *King Alfred*, p. 171.
 82. Smyth, *Alfred*, p. 530 and p. 524.
 83. See, for example, Charles Plummer, *The Life and Times of Alfred the Great: Being the Ford Lectures for 1901* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), p. 146.
 84. Charles Plummer, ed., *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1892–89), Parker Chronicle, an. 851, etc. All translations from the *Chronicle* are from G.N.Garmonsway, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (1953; London: J.M. Dent, 1994).
 85. *Will of King Alfred*, ed. F.E.Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1914), no. 11; Keynes and Lapidge, *King Alfred*, p. 174. My translation; note that *folce*, as above, is the AngloSaxon gloss of *ecclesia*, further suggesting a consonance of religion and community.
 86. Christopher Brooke, *From Alfred to Henry III: 871–1272* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961), p. 50.

CHAPTER FOUR: WULF AMONG THE PAGANS

1. Rev. Spencer Robert Wigram, ed. *The Carticulary of the Monastery of St. Frideswide at Oxford*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895, 1896), 1:2. This is the foundation charter by Æthelred, “Rex omnes Danes Angliam incolentes,” a phrase by which he declares his sovereignty over Anglo-Danes. He seems to have earned his sobriquet *unræd* in part by making this decree ironically “cum consilio optimatum satrapum.”
2. “ubi fuit uidere miseriam dum quisque carissimos hospites, quos etiam arctissima necessitudo duliores effecerat, cogeretur prodere et amplexus gladio deturbare.”

- William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. R.A.B.Mynors, R.M.Thomson, M.Winterbottom, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 276–77; their translation. The adjectives describing Æthelred are Malmesbury's, p. 268. Simon Keynes argues, on the contrary, that the massacre had popular support: *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready'* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 208; but see James W.Earl, "Violence and Non-Violence in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric's Passion of St. Edmund," *Philological Quarterly* 78 (1999):125–49, esp. 125–26.
3. An excellent discussion of the massacre and its contexts is by Jonathan Wilcox, "The St. Brice's Day Massacre and Archbishop Wulfstan," *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies for Coexistence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Diane Wolfthal (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 79–91.
 4. Or "weeds among wheat." Dawn Hadley, "Cockle amongst the Wheat": The Scandinavian Settlement of England," in Frazer, *Social Identity*, pp. 111–35, reads "lolium" as cockle (p. 118), which echoes Old English and later English use of *coccel* to mistranslate the Vulgate Matt. 13:25, "zizania": "mid coccele onmiddan þam hwæte." R.M.Liuzzi, *The Old English Version of the Gospels*, 2 vols., EETS, o.s. 304 and 314, 1:27. For example, Aelfric uses *coccel* in his homily on the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost: "swa swa clæne corn mid fulum coccele" (Clemons, 1955), 1.35, line 526; but a number of Old English glosses also offer *ate* or *lassur*. See L.Goosens, ed., *The Old English Glosses of MS. Brussels, Royal Library 1650* (Brussels, 1974), AldV 1, line 2330: "*loliarum lasera coccela zizaniorum*"; T.Wright and R.P.Wülcker, *AngloSaxon and Old English Vocabularies*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1884), BrGl 1, 8.94, "*lolium ate*"; B. von Lindenheim, *Das Durhamer Pflanzenglossar* (Bochum-Langendreer, 1941), DurGl, line 224, "*Lolium coccel vel ate*." Z v ov is a Mediterranean weed known in English as darnel (OED, cv. cockle); see J.H. Hessels, *An Eighth-Century Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary* (Cambridge, 1890) Corpus Gl 2, line 380, "*Zezania lolium*." [Asser, ch 95; see notes by Lapidge]
 5. On distinctions between Danes, Northmen, and Englishmen in this period, see Alfred P.Smyth, "The Emergence of English Identity, 700–1000," in *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe* (New York: St. Martins, 1998), pp.24–52, esp. pp. 33–37. But see Hadley, "Scandinavian Settlement," who concludes there was no simple opposition between "Dane" and "English."
 6. Wilcox, "St. Brice's Day," p. 84.
 7. Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1943; Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 380. This is not Gunnhild, sister of Harthcnut, and daughter of Cnut by Emma.
 8. See, for example, Geoffrey Elton, *The English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 27–28; and the distinction between English and Norman sustained by Orderic Vitalis, Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monk and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1984), pp. 9–12.
 9. The ecclesiastical tenor of English law is described by M.K.Lawson, "Archbishop Wulfstan and the Homiletic Element in the Laws of Æthelred II and Cnut," *The English Historical Review* 107 (1992):565–586. On Wulfstan's authorship of Cnut's laws, see Dorothy Whitelock, "Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut," *The English Historical Review* 63 (1948):433–52; and A.G.Kennedy, "Cnut's law code of 1018," *ASE* 11 (1983):57–81.

10. Patrick Wormald, "Engla Lond: The Making of an Allegiance," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7 (1994):1–24, 15.
11. See Augustine, *The City of God* (London: Penguin, 1972), I.i, p. 6: "For God's providence constantly uses war to correct and chasten the corrupt morals of mankind" "See also Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Columbia University Press, 1966).
12. Simon Keynes, "The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon," in Donald Scragg, ed., *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 81–113, p. 98.
13. Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven, 1989), p. 25: In a letter to Ethelred, Alcuin writes, "Qui sanctus legit scripturas et veteres revolvit historias et seculi considerat eventum, inveniet pro huiusmodi peccatis reges regna et populos patriam perdidisse." My own work depends a great deal on Howe's.
14. N.J. Higham, *The English Conquest: Gildas and Britain in the Fifth Century* (Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 7. See Hanning, *The Vision of History*, pp. 22–23. See also Howe, *Migration*, pp. 8–26.
15. Higham, *English Conquest*, pp. 9–10.
16. Higham, *English Conquest*, p. 13.
17. "tantis frugum copiis insula quantas nulla retro aetas meminit," I.xiv, Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede: Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (1969; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 48–49; hereafter *HE*. Higham notes that this is the same in Gildas, *English Conquest*, p. 27.
18. *HE*, I, xv.
19. Paul Szarmach, "The (Sub-) Genre of *The Battle of Maldon*" in Janet Cooper, ed., *The Battle of Maldon: fiction and Fact* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), pp. 43–61, p. 45.
20. Szarmach, "Genre," p. 46.
21. Janet Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, EETS ss. 6 (1980), p. 134.
22. Ælfric, in *Letania maiore*, ed. Benjamin Thorpe, *The Sermones Catholici or Homilies of Ælfric*, 2 vols. (London: Ælfric Society, 1844–6), I:244–58, p. 244, line 23; trans. Swanton, *Prose*, p. 143. For a detailed study of Rogationtide traditions in Anglo-Saxon England, see Gordon Seller's 1996 Ph.D. dissertation, Loyola University Chicago.
23. Howe, *Migration*, p. 11.
24. In Howe, *Migration*, p. 20.
25. In Howe, *Migration*, pp. 26–27.
26. Wulfstan's moniker, Lupi (Wolf), may be abbreviated from Wulfstan, but it may, as Howe has suggested, indicate a sense of himself as a prophetic defender of the faith. Lupus of Troyes, discussed in Bede, *HE*, I.xvii, contained Pelagianism in Britain, the sin which seems to have brought on the Saxons. Howe writes, "Wulfstan may have styled his work *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* to signal his identification with an earlier defender of the island's faith," *Migration*, p. 16. Although Howe does not mention it, there may also be a possible iconography of the wolf as a fierce defender, something which we see in Ælfric's *Passion of St. Edmund*, in which a wolf is sent to guard the head of King Edmund; Michael Swanton, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, 2nd ed. (London: Everyman, 1993), pp. 158–64, p. 161. Sam Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993), p. 109, suggests the wolf may have been a "guardian spirit for the kings of

- East Anglia,” and also notes the incident of Edmund’s head. The wolf may also indicate an exclusively East Anglian association with the founding myth of Rome, in which a she-wolf guards and raises Romulus and Remus. See James Campbell et al., eds., *The Anglo-Saxons* (London: Penguin, 1982), p. 67.
27. Sir Geoffrey Elton, *The English* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), pp. 4–5. See Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *English Historical Documents c. 500–1042*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), § 49, where Cnut titles himself “king of all England and king of the Danes and king of the Norwegians,” p. 462. The legal force of Cnut over all ethnicities is clear in § 83: “And he who violates these laws which the king has given to all men, whether he be Danish or English, is to forfeit his wergild to the king,” p. 467.
 28. Christopher Brooke, *From Alfred to Henry III, 871–1272* (1961; New York: W.W.Norton, 1969), p. 61.
 29. Sarah Foot, “The Making of *Anglecynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996):25–49, 49.
 30. See II Ethelred, 6.2, “And neither they nor we are to receive the other party’s slave, or thief, or person concerned in a feud”; Whitelock, EHD, p. 439. On the slave trade in England among the English and the Danes, especially among the vikings and the Muslims, see Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles, 850–880* (Oxford University Press, 1977), especially chapter 11, “Scandinavian Dublin and the Slave Trade with Islam.” Generally, see William D. Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).
 31. John le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (1976; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 54.
 32. I am grateful to Dr. Karma Lochrie who persuaded me of this point.
 33. Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings* (Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 75–76.
 34. Gillian Fellows Jensen, “The Vikings in England: A Review,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975):181–206, 184; this is her summary of P.H.Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings* (1962). Whitelock, EHD, p. 439, translates II Ethelred such that “vikings” appear able to bring suit, but the term is not *wicing*, but *scei man*, literally a “ship-man,” as Whitelock points out, p. 439, n.l. In apposition to the law’s *landesmann*, a native of a country, it appears that *scei man* means a foreigner, rather than a Viking: “And if anyone charges a man of our own country that he stole cattle or slew a man, and the charge is brought by one *scei man* and one man of this country, he is then to be entitled to no denial.” Other than this disputable notice, I have not been able to find any legal provision for Vikings, *per se*, nor any degree of wergild.
 35. Janet Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius*, EETS ss.6 (1980), V,v, p. 120; and note 120/4–5, p. 306. See also p. 6, “hu se consul Metellus oferwon þa wicingas.” Cicero and Lucan from Sir William Smith and Sir John Lockwood, *Chambers-Murray Latin-English Dictionary* (1933; Cambridge University Press, 1993), s.v.
 36. Bately, *Orosius*, III, vii, p. 63; and note 63/29–30. See also Rufinus Episcopus, PL 150:1620, “unde ab Alexandro illo Magno quidem comprehensus pirata . . .,” a quote from Augustine, *Civitas Dei*, IV, iv; PL 41:115. See also *Civitas Dei*, II. xxvi.
 37. W.G.Stryker, *The Latin-Old English Glossary in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A.III*, (Stanford Dissertation, 1951), pp. 28–367, no. 4836. The term is treated as a tribal name in most translations of “Widsith.” See lines 45, 59, and 79.
 38. Howe, *Migration*, p. 87.

39. Maximus Taurinensis, "Homilia LXXXVIII. De non timendis hostibus carnalibus et de gratiis post cibum Deo agendis I," *PL* 57:453C ff., "Denique sanctus Job dicit: Piraterium est vita hominis super terram (Job VII); hoc est, sive quod homines in hac vita omnia experiantur mala; piraterium enim Latine experimentum dici potest; seu certe piraterium, quod in hac vita circa homines diabolus, tanquam pirata desaeuiat; piraterium enim habitaculum piratarum est." The phrase is from Job 7:1 in Jerome's Vulgate, although the modern Vulgate reads, "Militia est vita hominis super terram." See also Rufinus Aquileiensis, *De Benedictionibus Patriarcharum Libri Duo*, *PL* 21:325A, "Sed vide quanta in verbis Patriarchae mysteria continentur. Gad, inquit, piraterium tentabit illum. Ponamus, ut diximus, personam Domini esse in Gad: hanc piraterium tentabit. Piraterium vero dicitur cohors quaedam et conspiratio piratarum."
40. Jensen, "Vikings in England," 182–83. Sir Frank Stenton, "The Historical Bearing of Place-Name Studies: The Danish Settlement of Eastern England," *TRHS* 24 (1942):1–24, argues that there was a large migration, while P.H. Sawyer, "The Density of the Danish Settlement in England," q.v. Jensen, argues for an initial viking attack of lesser numbers and a later ingress of larger numbers. This second wave of settlement is also argued by Kenneth Cameron, *Scandinavian Settlement in the Territory of the Five Boroughs: The Place-Name Evidence* (1965). R.H.M. Dolley argues that the period c. 925–75 saw the settlement of Danes under the submission of Edward the Elder and the removal of "the more militant among the Danes of East Anglia" to Ireland; Jensen, p. 191.
41. Henry Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 64. See also Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1943; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 506. This is not to say that there were no exceptions. For example, some incidents of Anglo-Danish sympathy for incoming vikings is evinced in sources such as the *Abingdon Chronicle*. See Peter Hunter Blair, *Anglo-Saxon England: An Introduction* (1959; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1996), pp. 91–92; and Stenton, *ASE*, p. 378, n. 1. Allegiance was certainly divided between the House of Wessex and Denmark at least until Cnut's marriage to Emma, second wife of King Æthelred, combined the royal lines. A second and more noteworthy exception to the union of Danish and Anglo-Saxon identities is the St. Brice's Day Massacre. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that massacres did take place in various parts of the country. Stenton, *ASE*, p. 380, says that in ordering this massacre, Æthelred was guilty of "a political crime." Wilcox has called it a pogrom; "St. Brice's Day," p. 80.
42. Cyril Hart, *The Danelaw* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), p. 20. See Whitelock, *EHD*, §§42, 44, 47, 49, and 53.
43. Robert Kellog, "The Context for Epic in Later Anglo-Saxon England," *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period*, eds. Helen Damico and John Leyerle (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1993), pp. 139–156, p. 147. See also John Edward Damon, "Advisors for Peace in the Reign of Æthelred the Unræd," *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies for Coexistence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Diane Wolfthal (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 57–78, who notes the "ambivalence in the response of Anglo-Saxons to the first wave of Danish invasions," p. 73.
44. Wilcox, "St. Brice's Day," p. 84.
45. Eric John, "The Return of the Vikings," in James Campbell, ed., *The AngloSaxons* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 192–213, p. 202. For further biographical details, see Dorothy Betherum, "Wulfstan," in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old*

- English Literature*, ed. Eric G. Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 210–46, pp. 201–11.
46. Stenton, ASE, p. 506. The Danelaw was comprised of the Five Boroughs (Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, and Stamford), East Anglia, and the south-east midlands.
 47. Betherum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 59, and Stenton, ASE, p. 380: “York and Lincoln, for example, were Danish rather than English towns.”
 48. Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 72: the English administration distinguished “between those who recognized the church’s authority and those nominal Christians who because of their barbarian background did not.” Wulfstan was responsible for a number of “secular” law codes, including those of Æthelstan and Cnut. Because of their strong religious elements, these law codes elide the distinction between the law of God and the law of the state: see Betherum, “Wulfstan,” p. 224, although Betherum does not think there was a distinction between Church and State at this time. One wonders whether Wulfstan’s incorporation of moral law into secular codes does not testify to one major difference between Church and State at the time: their respective sources of authority. But see Jensen, “Vikings in England,” p. 202, outlining proponents of a quick and relatively thorough assimilation.
 49. Cnut 1020 in F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903–16) 1:273–5, line 2.
 50. Wulfstan, *Institutes of Polity* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 121), ed. K. Jost, “Die Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical,” *Swiss Studies in English* 47 (1959): 39–164, no. 4.
 51. Betherum, “Wulfstan,” p. 211 and p. 216. Edition by Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*; and Dorothy Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966). All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.
 52. The editions are enumerated in Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi*, pp. 68–69, and Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, pp. 106–107. Sweet’s reader was revised by Whitelock as *Sweet’s Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), and has been through fourteen editions since its publication in 1876.
 53. Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: University Press, 1986), p. 90. The argument I am making was attempted by Stephanie Dien, “*Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*: The Order and Date of the Three Versions,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 76 (1975): 561–570. I conclude, as she does, that the version gets progressively shorter, but not for the same reasons.
 54. Greenfield and Calder, *Critical History*, pp. 90–91. They cite Stephanie Hollis, “The Thematic Structure of the *Sermo Lupi*,” ASE 6 (1977): 175–95.
 55. Hollis, “Structure,” 177, 178.
 56. Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 164. Hollis, “Structure,” p. 182, n. 1, cites his *Rhythm and Cosmic Order in Old English Christian Literature* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 21–3. See also Joseph Trahern, Jr., “Fatalism and the Millennium,” in Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 160–171, p. 168. Trahern notes that Wulfstan like Ælfric “announces the imminent end of the world,” but does not suggest that accumulated sin is its cause.

57. See Theophilus of Antioch cited in Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), p. 117.
58. Richard Landes, "Lest the Millennium be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography, 100–800 CE," in Werner Verbeke et al., eds., *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Lueven University Press, 1988), pp. 137–211. See also Rudolphus Glaber, *Historiarum Libri Quinque*, ed. Neithard Blust (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp. 44–47, and p. 44. n. 1, which describes this view of the seven ages of the world as comprising a number of years or generations. See also Isidori Hispalensis, *Etymologiarum sive originum*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), V:xxxviii: "Residuum sextæ ætatis tempus Deo soli est cognitum."
59. Charles W. Jones, ed., *Bedæ: Opera de temporibus* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1943), p. 133.
60. Rev. Joseph Stevenson, ed. and trans., "The Chronicle of the Venerable Presbyter Bede, the Anglo-Saxon; or, Concerning the Six Ages of the World," *The Church Historians of England* (London: Seeleys, 1853), p. 652. This is an excerpt of book ten of *De tempore ratione*; see Jones, *Bedæ*, p. 202. In a letter, Bede writes, "I am as much grieved as I can be, I confess, or else greatly annoyed, whenever upstarts ask me how many of the last thousand years remain," in Jones, *Bedæ*, p. 134.
61. Hollis suggests, p. 193, that Wulfstan's putative position "has similarities" to 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12. In this passage, the antichrist is said to be sent by God in punishment to unfaithful men. But 2 Thess. 3:6, further on, indicates that consequently, the faithless ought to be shunned and the faith increased, not that the antichrist will bring on the last days. Contrary to Hollis's assumption, this passage is not eschatological.
62. Cited by Trahern, "Fatalism and the Millennium," pp. 166–67. Blickling Homily XI is quoted on p. 167. Michael Swanton, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London: J.M. Dent, 1993), p. 178, also cites the Blickling homilist with respect to Wulfstan's opening line.
63. Betherum, "De temporibus anticristi," *Homilies of Wulfstan*, IV, l. 78; pp. 128–133, p. 132. Hollis does not refer to this sermon nor Wulfstan's Latin sermon, *De anticristo*, Betherum la, also relevant. The trope of a worsening age is certainly not unknown to the modern world.
64. "De temporibus anticristi," l. 37, p. 130: "Leofan men, God geþafa þam deofle Antecriste þæt he mot ehtan godra manna, for am þe hi sculon, swa ic ær cwæ , urh a ehtnesse beon geclænsode ⁊ sy an clæne faran to heofona rice." See also "Secundum Lucam," Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, III, ll. 1–15, and 38ff, "Eac hit awriten is, æt sunne apystra ær worulde ende ⁊ mona adeorca ⁊ steorran hreosa for manna synnum; ⁊ æt bi þonne Antecrist wede þset hit bi gelic þam swylce hit swa sy." The reign of the antichrist follows the signs in the heavens. Very importantly, the sermon ends with "woruld a butan ende," which strongly suggests that Wulfstan may follow Bede's orthodox notion that the advent of the seventh age does not demand the destruction of the world.
65. Betherum, "Wulfstan," p. 222.
66. Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 355.
67. Hollis, "Structure," p. 185. I entirely disagree for reasons cited above. I also disagree with Hollis' interpretation of the role of the Vikings "as antichrists," not least because

- the term is not plural. Furthermore, it does not make theological sense that English sin would bring on an antichrist to punish the world: why should English sin, for example, bring apocalypse to the Greeks, or to the Lombards, or to the Slavs, or to the Muslims? Why are the English and their behavior so important to the survival of the entire world and to the end of time itself?
68. The version of the *Sermo* quoted in all cases is Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, XX (EI) pp. 267–75. Variations will be noted in the text. Dorothy Whitelock notes that *unlaga* means “violations of the law” or “injustices” rather than “bad laws,” *Sermo Lupi*, p. 48, n. 14. See also Betherum, p. 356, n. 16.
 69. Betherum, “Wulfstan,” p. 225.
 70. Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 356, n. 23–25, notes, “The simile was probably suggested to Wulfstan by the inevitable comparison of alms to water that quenches the fire of sin.” She refers her reader to Ecclesiasticus 3:33. The comparison to fire and water seems to me relatively unencumbered by textual precedence.
 71. Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 92.
 72. Richard Humble, *The Fall of Saxon England* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1975), p. 120.
 73. Hollis, “Structure,” 177, 178, 186. But see Howe, *Migration*, pp. 9–10.
 74. The *folclaga* or *folces laga* may refer to one portion or all portions of the tripartite code of law current in Wulfstan’s time. Upon taking power in 1066, the Normans recognized three indigenous codes of law: the Saxon, Mercian, and Danish (Danelaw). See Stenton, ASE, p. 506.
 75. I dealt with this question in “The Treatment of History in Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*” delivered to the SAMLA, Atlanta, GA (Nov. 5–7, 1998).
 76. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996), pp. 135, 139.
 77. Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, p. 200.
 78. Howe, *Migration*, pp. 1–7. The phrase “remembered history” belongs to Bernard Lewis, Howe, p. 3. The currency of the myth is evident in the foundation myths of the United States: see Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 15–18.
 79. Patrick W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1993), p. 150; Conner is speaking specifically of the Benedictine Reform and the poetry it inspired, which nonetheless constitutes the bulk of surviving Anglo-Saxon literature.
 80. Cambridge University Library Ff. 1.23, ed. K. Wildhagen, *Die Cambridger Psalter* (1910; Darmstadt, 1964), 2.1, 2.8, 9.6, 9.12, 9.16, 9.18, 9, 20, and 9.21, for example.
 81. Genesis 17:5 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 201), ed. S.J. Crawford, *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, EETS os. 160 (1969).
 82. This is also forcefully stressed in Wulfstan’s “To Eallum Folke,” Betherum VIIa, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, pp. 166–68.
 83. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (1981; University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 175.
 84. See Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Literature* (University of Toronto Press, 2001: “I submit that the devil is above all an ontological symbol” (p. 3) and “a literary motif” (p. 12).
 85. Whitelock, *Sermo*, p. 49, n. 25, declares God’s dues to be monetary. Betherum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 357, n. 27, adds that the failure to pay these dues contributed

- to the impoverishment of the churches. The claim is made solely on the evidence that *godes gerihta* is used in the laws of V Æthelred ii, which defines these dues as “plough-alms, tithe of young livestock, tithe of the fruits of the earth, Peter’s pence, light-dues and payment for the souls of the dead.” But I imagine Wulfstan was not confining his remarks to a shortcoming in Church accounts.
86. Hincmar of Rheims and others saw Norse invasions as “a divine punishment for the royal treatment of the Church’s estates”; Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms: 450–751* (New York: Longman, 1994), p. 275.
 87. Hollis, “Structure,” 187.
 88. Luke 12:45–47 reads, “Gyf þonne se þeow cwy on hys heortan, min hlaford uferaþ hys cyme, & & agyn beatan þa cnihtas & þa þinena, & etan & drincan & beon oferdruncen, þonne cymþ þæs þeowan hlaford on þam dæge þe he ne wen , & þære tide þe he nat, & todælp hine & sett his dæl mid þam ungetreowum.” From R.M.Liuzza, *The Old English Version of the Gospels*, EETS ss. 304 (1994). Another instance describes *ungetreowum* as one of the sins of the Sodomites, or, rather, a “sodomitish” sin: “Ic eom ondetta sodomisce synne þe hie on gegyltan, þæt is geligre, leasunga, gitsunga, getreowleasnesse, yfelre recceleasnesse & ristlæcnesse minra synna,” London, British Library, MS. Cotton Tiberius CI; ed. H.Logeman, “Anglo-Saxonica Minora,” *Anglia* 12 (1889): 97–120, 101, line 20.
 89. J.R.Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1894; University of Toronto Press, 1993).
 90. Betherum VII, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 159, line 55.
 91. Hollis, “Structure,” 190.

CHAPTER FIVE: WODEN AND TROY

1. “He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.” My thanks to Professor Monika Otter of Dartmouth College for the opportunity to present portions of this chapter at Kalamazoo, MI.
2. Walter Goffart, “Two Notes on Germanic Antiquity Today,” *Traditio* 50 (1995):9–30; he discusses early Germanic origin stories, but his words are equally applicable to Norman origin stories: “Nineteenth-century scholars...placed no trust in the legends, mainly of origins, that these texts provide. Our times have broken with their cautious reticence. Origin legends are regarded in certain learned circles as having extraordinary importance for the existence of early medieval tribes (*gentes*)” (12). Trojan origins are considered by Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in LateMedieval France*, trans. Susan Ross Huston, ed. Frederic L.Cheyette (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
3. See Kevin S. Kiernan, *The Thorkelin Transcripts of Beowulf* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1986). Thorkelin titled his edition (1815), *De Danorum Rebus Gestis...Poëma Danicum Dialecto Anglosaxonica*. The Danish context is discussed by T.A.Shippy, “Introduction” in *Beowulf: the Critical Heritage*, eds. T.A.Shippey and Andreas Haarder (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–74.

4. Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 218.
5. The difficulty of distinguishing between English Norman and Continental Norman literature is discussed by Peter S. Noble, "Romance in England and Normandy in the Twelfth Century," *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, eds. David Bates and Anne Curry (London: Hambledon, 1994), pp. 69–78. The distinction, second to a linguistic one, is largely thematic.
6. Hugh MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1982), p. 129.
7. See chapter one, and Sir Frank Stenton, "Early English History" in Doris Mary Stenton, ed., *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England, Being the Collected Papers of Frank Mary Stenton* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 346–56. The debate is described briefly by Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), pp. 101–102, and see her recommendations, p. 101, n.1.
8. Stenton, "Early English History," p. 349. See James Campbell, "Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England* with Special Reference to the Earlier Period," in Donald Matthew, ed., *Stenton's Anglo-Saxon England Fifty Years On* (Reading, 1994), pp. 49–59, esp. p. 52. See also Simon Keynes, "Anglo-Saxon History after *Anglo-Saxon England*" in Matthew, *Fifty Years On*, pp. 83–110.
9. Stenton, "Early English History," p. 350; Edward A. Freeman, *A History of the Norman Conquest of England: Its Causes and Results*, 2nd ed., 6 vols. (Oxford, 1860), 1:84 and 1:91.
10. Dorothy Whitelock, "Changing Currents in Anglo-Saxon Studies," in her *History, Law and Literature in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England* (1958; London, 1987), §1, p. 26. For further examples of this line of thought, see William Vaughan Moody and Robert Moss Lovett, *A History of English Literature* (New York, 1902), p. 22; F. St. John Corbett, *A History of British Poetry* (London, 1904), p. 8; and A.R. Waller, "The Beginnings," in A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, eds., *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1949), p. 1. A caution against this line of thought is raised by Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 187–219.
11. See, for example, "The Laws of King William the Conqueror," *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* (London: Public Records Office, 1840), II.i, pp. 488–49.
12. Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1997), pp. 15–16.
13. Shopkow, *History and Community*, p. 143.
14. Charles Homer Haskins, *The Normans in European History* (1915; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1995), p. 29. In June of 1911, four Norwegian students sailed an open viking boat from Norway to Rouen, the Norman capital, to join an international celebration of Norman origins. The festival included pageants, feasts, and plays; the Kensington rune stone was brought from Minnesota; and, as Haskins describes it, "the cider of Normandy paled before the champagne of France," p. 2.
15. Cassandra Potts, "Atque unum ex diversis gentibus populum effecit: Historical Tradition and the Norman Identity," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 18(1996): 139–152, 140. She cites M. de Boüard, "De la Neustrie Carolingienne a la Normandie féodale: Continuité ou discontinuité?" *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 28 (1955): 1–14.

16. R.H.C.Davis, *The Normans and Their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), pp. 15–16.
17. Davis, *Myth*, p. 15; the quote is from D.C.Douglas, *The Norman Achievement* (London, 1969), p. xiii. Davis sees the unity of the Normans as the invention of Orderic. But this is refuted by G.A.Loud, “The ‘gens Normannorum’—Myth or Reality?” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1982):104–16, at 105.
18. Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, “The *Gesta Normannorum Ducorum*: A History without an End,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 3(1980):106–118, at 110.
19. Loud, “gens Normannorum,” 113. See also Beaune, *Birth of an Ideology*, p. 227, who suggests that such myths may have created “a right to possess the national territory and, at the same time, to anchor in ties of blood the solidarity among different regions and social groups.”
20. On the distinction between fact and truth, see Marian David, “Truth as Identity and Truth as Correspondence” in *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Michael P.Lynch (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), pp. 683–704.
21. Loud, “gens Normannorum,” 114.
22. Elanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840–1066* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 62–63.
23. Ian Short, “*Tam Angli quam Franci*: Self-definition in Anglo-Norman England,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 18 (1996):155–75, 163. See above, chapter two, on a *lingua gens*.
24. There were some strong divisions between Normans and Bretons as evinced by an attempted rebellion by Bretons and Englishmen against the Normans in 1075; see John le Patrourel, *The Norman Empire* (1976; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 74–75. For a more detailed discussion of uprisings against the Norman incursion, see Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1995), esp. ch. 2. Sources containing such distinctions are listed in Loud, “gens Normannorum,” p. 115.
25. G.N.Garmonsway, trans. and ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: J.M. Dent, 1994), an. 1066, p. 196; but not in the Laud Chronicle (E), an. 1066, of St. Augustine’s Canterbury, the author of which entry was critical of Norman government: see le Patourel, *Norman Empire*, pp. 328–329.
26. D.J.A.Matthew, “The English Cultivation of Norman History,” in *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, eds. David Bates and Anne Curry (London: Hambledon, 1994), pp. 1–17, at p. 2.
27. Short, “Self-definition,” 162–63.
28. David Crouch, “Normans and Anglo-Normans: A Divided Aristocracy?” in Bates and Curry, *England and Normandy*, pp. 51–67, at p. 63 and p. 65.
29. In Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 172, n. 99, and pp. 173–74.
30. See Ian Short, “Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 14 (1991):229–49, 242: “the real, everyday language of royal, seigniorial, civic and commercial administration in twelfthcentury Britain was in fact Anglo-Norman,” and “Anglo-Norman was used in the courts of law from an early date, and...pleading in the vernacular was the normal practice.”
31. This is exemplified by Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*; see Berthold Altaner, *Patrology*, trans. Hilda Graef (Freiburg: Herder & Herder, 1958), p. 208.
32. Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 186.

33. A.Campbell, ed. and trans., *The Chronicle of Æthelweard* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), pp. 1–2. See Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 42–46; and Sean Miller, “Æthelweard” in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 18.
34. Campbell, *Chronicle*, pp. 7–8. “Tribus” does not seem to be a reflex of “tres, tria,” meaning three, but of “tribus,” meaning either tribes or a third part of the tribes of the Roman people. As Campbell points out, “leguntur” is plural but its subject is “regarded as collective,” p. 7, n. a.
35. “qui tandem nomen istud cum giota comparare velit, in vagina nationum vel fabrica gentium,” Auctor incertus, *Grammitica Gothicæ Linguae e Germanico Sermone in Latinum Versa, Interprete F.Tempestini*, PL 18. It is also used by William of Jumiègue, see above.
36. This distinction, operative in Anglo-Saxon England, does not seem to be operative in France. The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* of Robert of Torigni, William of Jumiègue, and Orderic Vitalis relates that Danes are also called Northmen. The etymology is taken from William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Guiscardi*, and Dudo of St. Quentin; Elisabeth M.C.van Houts, ed. and trans., *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumiègues, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 16–17, n.2.
37. Campbell, *Chronicle*, p. 7 and p. 9. His translation.
38. Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 182, n. 158, and p. 184. The quotes are from Rosalind Ransford, “A Kind of Noah’s Ark: Aelred of Rievaulx and National Identity,” *Studies in Church History* 18 (1984):137–46. Williams notes, by comparison, that Wace stressed Henry’s Norman descent. On Mathilda and Edgar aetheling, see p. 173.
39. Aelredus Rievallensis, *Genealogia Regum Anglorum*, PL 195:717A–717B.
40. Symeonis Dunelmensis, *De Primo Saxonum Adventu* in Hodgson Hinde, ed. *Symeonis Dunelmensis Opera et Collectanea* (Durham: Andrews & Co., 1868), p. 203. For authorship compare Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 116 and p. 148.
41. *Historiæ Continuatio*, in Hinde, *Symeonis*, p. 81. The myth of the *gens Normannorum* is discussed by Michel Bur, “Les comtes de Champagne et la ‘Normanitas’: Semiologie d’un tombeau,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 3 (1980): 22–32; Davis, *Myth*; Loud, “gens Normannorum”; and Potts, “Atque unum.”
42. Heregerius Lobienensis, *Vita S. Landoaldi*, PL 139:1115C. Wibertus, *Sancti Leonis Vita*, PL 143:499B–501A. Hildegardis, *Vita Sancti Ruperti ducis Bingæ in dioecesi Moguntina a Sancta Hildegarde abbatissa scripta*, PL 197:1090D1092B.
43. Charles Johnson, ed. and trans., *Hugh the Chanter: The History of the Church of York 1066–1127* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 2–3. See also Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 123–25.
44. Diana Greenway, ed. and trans., *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon: Historia Anglorum, The History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), dated pp. lxvi–lxxvii. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.
45. Colgrave Mynors, *HE*, I, xv. They translate, “They came from three of the braver Germanic peoples, that is from the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes.”
46. Greenway, *Historia Anglorum*, VI, xxvi; her translation. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 196: “God punished the sins of the English with sins and invasions “Guy, Bishop of Amiens, author of the *Carmen de Hastingæ Proelio* of 1068, similarly

- wrote to William concerning the conquest that “pro uelle tibi cuncta Deus tribuit” (“God granted everything according to your desire”). With respect to the crossing, he wrote in echo of Bede’s story of the crossing of Germanus that the land “Leta, sinu placido, teque tuosque capit” (“joyfully received you and yours in a calm bay”); *The Carmen de Hastingæ Proelio of Guy Bishop of Amiens*, ed. and trans. Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), p. 7 and pp. 127–28; their translation.
47. For the reference to Dudo, see Greenway, *Historia Anglorum*, p. 389, n. 164, which also concerns the identity of Hasting as Hæsten of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, an. 892(893).
 48. Greenway, *Historia Anglorum*, p. 390, n. 165. The siege of Paris is described in a poem by Abbo, which is discussed in relation to *The Battle of Maldon* by Paul Szarmach, “The (Sub-) Genre of *The Battle of Maldon*” in Janet Cooper, ed. *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993) pp. 43–61.
 49. MacDougall, *Racial Myth*, p. 7.
 50. Shopkow, *History and Community*, p. 124 and p. 142.
 51. *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Acton Griscom (London: Longmans, Green, 1929), p. 219; based on Cambridge 1706, Stadtbibliothek Bern MS 568, and Lord Harleck’s MS 17—see p. 218. Walter’s book is also cited as the source of Geoffrey Gaimar’s story in his epilogue.
 52. HRB, p. 222. That the description is traditional is asserted by Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Twayne, 1994), p. 13. He notes parallels between Geoffrey and Gildas, Nennius, and Bede. The distinction between the Normans and the Bretons is made many times by Marie de France, a twelfth-century French writer who wrote for the English court. See, for example, “Bisclavret,” ll. 3–4; and “Les Deus Amanz,” Robert Hanning and Joan Ferrante, trans. and eds., *The Lais of Marie de France* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1982). The distinction is not unusual among French authors.
 53. Curley, *Monmouth*, p. 15.
 54. Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 29.
 55. Richard K. Emmerson, “Gog and Magog” in David Lyle Jeffrey, ed., *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), pp. 311–12. The letter to Gratian and Augustine’s association of Goths to Getæ is quoted in Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 28.
 56. Walter Stephens, *Giants in Those Days: Folklore, Ancient History, and Nationalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 67: “Giants were first and foremost historical beings, who had been encountered by Moses and described in the Pentateuch.” For example see 1 Sam 17:4 for Goliath; Numbers 13:28–34; and Deuteronomy 2:10–11, 2:20–21, 3:13, and 9:1–2.
 57. See Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), on this typological use. See Curley, *Monmouth*, p. 18, where the giant is typically seen as an echo of Virgil’s Antæus. By virtue of what appears to be a consistent Anglo-Norman interest in genealogy, an interest which would give significance to the giant’s otherwise inexplicable name, I cannot but disagree with the conclusions of Francis Ingledew, “The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: the Case of

- Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*" *Speculum* 69 (1994):665–704, especially p. 667, where Geoffrey is claimed to reawaken "the issue of genealogy."
58. Stephens, *Giants*, p. 75.
 59. David Lyle Jeffrey, "Giants in the Earth," in his *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition*, pp. 303–04; and John O'Meara, trans., *Augustine: The City of God* (London: Penguin, 1984), pp. 637–42, XV, xxiii.
 60. Peter Fisher and Hilda Ellis Davidson, trans. and ed., *Saxo Grammaticus: The History of the Danes*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: D.S.Brewer, 1979), I:9. Saxo's genealogy of the Danes has the English and the Danes both descended from Humbli, son of Dan, who founded Denmark, II:25.
 61. Jeffrey, "Giants," p. 304.
 62. R.E.Kaske, "*Beowulf* and the Book of Enoch," *Speculum* 46 (1971):421–31, 423 and 424.
 63. Peter Fisher, *Saxo Grammaticus*, p. 9.
 64. *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum*, ed. W.M.Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), V, xxxix. On the ages of the world, see Richard Landes, "Lest the Millennium be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography 100–800 CE" in *The Use and Abuse of Escha-tology in the Middle Ages*, eds. Werner Verbeke et al. (Lueven University Press, 1988), pp. 137–211; and Hildegard L.C.Tristram, *Die Weltzeitalter bei den Angelsachsen und den Iren* (Heidelberg, 1985).
 65. Edmond Faral, *La Légende Arthurienne: études et documents*, 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Ancienne, 1929), fasc. 255, 1:172.
 66. *Rodulfi Glabri Historiam Libri Quinque*, ed. Neithard Bulst, trans. John France and Paul Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), see esp. pp. 10–11. See Herwig Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 313–14. See also John A. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 165.
 67. Faral, *Légende*, p. 173. The genealogy is available at pp. 270–72, and p. 277 for a comparison with Gregory of Tours' account. More commonly, *Sancti Georgii Florentii Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis Historia Francorum Epitomata per Fredigarium scholasticum*, PL 71:577B ff. See the introduction to J.M.WallaceHadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).
 68. Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 201, calls Trojan origins mythical.
 69. Auctor incertus, *Gesta Regum Francorum, Partim e Gregorii Turonensis Historia*, PL 96:1421C.
 70. "Hac igitur patrata victoria, et rebelles condigna ultione perdomuit, et Trojanos nostros, Sicambros videlicet, Francos appellari praecepit." Rorico Moissiacensis, *Gesta Francorum, ab ipsius gentis origine ad obitum usque Clodovei I Regis*, PL 139:591A. He is described by the PL editor as "canonicus et cancellarius ecclesiae ac universitatis Tholosanae." Intriguingly, Chaucer notes that Statius, author of the *Thebiad*, a story of Troy and its fall, was also from Toulouse; *The House of Fame*, ll. 1460–61.
 71. Aimoinus Floriacensis, *Aimoini Historia Francorum Libri Quator*, PL 139:637D–639A.

72. C.W.Grocock and J.E.Siberry, eds. and trans., *The Historia Vie Hierosolimi of Gilo of Paris and a Second, Anonymous Author* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), lines 10–11. Compare Virgil, *Aeneid*, i. 206, “Illic fas Trojæ regna resurgere” (“There [in Latium] it is fated that Troy’s kingdom shall rise again”). See also Aimoinus Floriacensis, *Aimoini Historiæ Francorum Libri Quator*, PL 137:637ff.
73. John Morris, ed. and trans., *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals* (London: Phillimore, 1980), §10. For dating, see pp. 1–3. Versions from Harley 3859 (s. ix–xii) and Chartres 98 (s.ix–x) are given in “Historia Britonum” by Faral, *Légende*, 111:2–62, pp. 6–9.
74. Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 61–67. The dating is according to Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 57.
75. Felice Lifshitz, “Dudo’s Historical Narrative and the Norman Succession of 996,” *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994):101–120, esp. 111.
76. R.H.C.Davis and Marjorie Chibnall, eds. and trans., *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 142–43: “Subegit autem urbes Anglorum cunctus dux Guillelmus copiis Normanniæ uno die ab hora tertia in vesperum, non multo extrinsecus adicetorio.” The comet is discussed on 142, n. 1, and is shown in the upper portion of panel 35 of the Bayeux Tapestry.
77. See Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon)* (Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 92.
78. van Houts, *William of Jumièges*, 1:14–15. See also pp. xxxvi–xxxvii. Her translations.
79. Guillelmus Apulus, *Guillelmi Apuli Historicum Poema de Rebus Normannorum in Sicilia, Apulia et Calabria Gestis*, PL 149. For a detailed study with respect to the Normans in Italy, see Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Making History: The Normans and Their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).
80. Morris, *Nennius* §17.
81. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 246. See also pp. 231–39.
82. Faral, *Legends*, pp. 83–84.
83. The early fourteenth-century *Chanson de Perceforest* claims that the Bretons left England upon the advent of the Saxons and settled in France. See Beaune, *Birth of an Ideology*, p. 233.
84. Shopkow, *History and Community*, p. 108.
85. Marjorie Chibnall, ed. and trans., *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 111:79–80. (Due to the unavailability of some of these volumes, I was forced to rely upon the Latin edition in the PL for Chibnall’s vols. 4–5.) Book IX, cap. iv, in PL 188:655A–B, e.g., “Denique supra littus Oceani maris, in boreali plaga consedit; et sibi, sociisque et haeredibus suis maritimam regionem incoluit, et a Dano, filio ejus, gens illa, e Trojanis orta, Danorum nomen accepit.” Orderic called himself *angligena*. See Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 151. I was unable to locate stories of Frankish or Norman origins in *Carmen de Hastingæ*, ed. Morton and Muntz, written before 11 May 1068.
86. Shopkow, *History and Community*, p. 112.
87. Alexander Bell, ed. *L’Estoire des Engleis by Geoffrei Gaimar* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), p. lii. See also Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 209–212; and Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 181–82. Short, “Patrons,” 244, dates the composition to between March 1136 and April 1137.

88. Thomas Wright, ed. *The Anglo-Norman Metrical Chronicle of Geoffrey Gaimar* (1850; New York: Burt Franklin, 1967), pp. 228–29.
89. Wright, p. 28, ll. 819–854, esp. 844–46: “Cels ki furent apelez/Le Westsexiens, e le Suthsexiens,/E les Estsexiens, e le Midelsexiens.”
90. R. William Leckie, Jr. *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History in the Twelfth Century* (University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 85.
91. Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, pp. 78–79.
92. St. Odo is said to have had a vision which signified the perfidy of Virgil, and “An anonymous author of the eleventh century relates further of a certain scholar, who in a moment of delirium cried out that he saw a troop of devils who assumed the forms of Æneas, Turnus and other characters of the *Æneas*”, Domenico Comparetti, *Virgil in the Middle Ages* (1895; London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966), pp. 92–93.
93. R.K. Gordon, “Introduction,” *The Story of Troilus* (1978; University of Toronto Press, 1992), n.p., and Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie*, trans. Gordon, pp. 1–22.
94. David Staines, trans., *The Complete Romances of Chrétien de Troyes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. xiii.
95. Edmond Faral, *Recherches sur les Sources Latines des Contes et Romans Courtois du Moyen Age* (Paris: Édouard Champion, 1913), p. 155.
96. George Huppert, “The Trojan Franks and Their Critics,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 227–41, 227. Trojan origins are beautifully displayed in an illumination to *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, Bibliothèque Nationale 2813, f.4, a fourteenth-century French chronicle available at <<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/bnf/bnf0003.html>>.
97. Beaune, *Birth of an Ideology*, p. 233.
98. Friedrich W.D. Brie, ed., *The Brut, or The Chronicles of England* (1906; Oxford University Press, 1960) EETS o.s. 131. Similar is Layamon, *Brut* (Oxford University Press, 1963) EETS o.s. 250, esp. ll. 978–1031, a Middle English translation of Wace.

CHAPTER SIX: ETHNOGENESIS AND THE *BATTLE OF MALDON*

1. Harold Bluetooth (c. 945–c. 985), King of Denmark, was baptized in 965. On the Jelling Stone, raised after 965 by Harold, he is described as “Harold, who won all Denmark and Norway and made the Danes Christian.” In Henry Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 53; see Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles, 850–880* (Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 7–9. If the vikings at Maldon comprised Danes and Norwegians, then some of the invading force was apparently, at least in name, Christian. “Viking,” as described in chapter two, means something like “pirate,” and not something like “pagan.” Because the term is not a proper name, nor an ethnic designation, I use it uncapitalized, following Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), and more recently, Régis Boyer, *Au Nom du viking* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 2002), pp. 121–22.

2. Patrick Wormald, "Engla Lond: The Making of an Allegiance," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7 (1994):1–24, 15.
3. Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (Yale University Press, 1989), p. 180. See Loyn, *Vikings in Britain*, p. 19.
4. Howe, *Migration*, p. 85.
5. Simply because these tribes *had to* arrive across water does not discount the fact that they *did*.
6. See Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton University Press, 1953); especially chapter eighteen on the historical novel and tragic realism.
7. J.R.R.Tolkien, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," in *Beowulf: Modern Critical Interpretations*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), pp. 5–31, p. 6. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, "Heroic Values and Christian Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Poetry*, eds. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 107–25, p. 117, sees *Maldon* as "an opportunity to examine the points of intersection between Old English literary conventions of the heroic ethos and the events of 'real life' in an occasional poem which is both a polished work of literature and a memorial of an historical event." This crux between history and literature virtually defines reception of the poem. See Roberta Frank, "The Battle of Maldon: Its Reception, 1726–1906," in Janet Cooper, ed., *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact* (London: Hambledon, 1973), pp. 237–47, pp. 244–45.
8. Graham Caie, "The Shorter Heroic Verse," in *Companion to Old English Poetry*, eds. Henk Aertsen and Rolf Bremmer, Jr. (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), pp. 79–94, p. 80.
9. Caie, "Heroic Verse," p. 88. Caie sees *Brunanburh* and *Maldon* as "connected with political needs of the Saxon rulers to create a united kingdom by claiming a common Germanic heritage with a great past and ideals of loyalty to God and the king," p. 93.
10. *Maldon* is a fragment and does not describe the end of the battle just as it begins *in media res*. As O'Brien O'Keefe has warned, "Heroic Values," p. 117, "its fragmentary condition must be kept in mind in any evaluation of the poem."
11. J.B.Bessinger, "*Maldon* and the *Óláfsdrápa*: An Historical Caveat," in Stanley B.Greenfield, ed., *Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1973), pp. 23–35, p. 24. The date is surmised from obituaries of Byrhtnoth, *ealdorman* of the Essex *fyrð* who died leading his English troops. A plaque raised by the British government at the site puts the date at 10 August. See <<http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/rawl/maldon/maldoncelebration.html>>.
12. D.G.Scragg, "The Battle of Maldon: Fact or Fiction?" in Cooper, *Maldon*, pp. 19–31, p. 21. The texts recording the battle are edited by Janet Bately, "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle"; Michael Lapidge, "The Life of Saint Oswald"; and Alan Kennedy, "Byrhtnoth's Obits and Twelfth-Century Accounts of the Battle of Maldon" in Donald Scragg, ed., *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).
13. N.F.Blake, "The Genesis of *The Battle of Maldon*" *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1973): 119–29, 120, suggests the later date. For reasons discussed below, I disagree with Scragg, "Fact or Fiction?" who suggests the poem may be earlier in this time frame rather than later.

14. Scragg, "Fact or Fiction?" p. 19, writes concerning the six leaves on which the poem was written, "Sir Robert Cotton had incorporated them in the composite manuscript," suggesting Cotton Otho A xii was compiled by Cotton himself. The manuscript is analyzed by Helmut Gneuss, "Die Handschrift Cotton Otho A.XII," *Anglia* 94 (1976):289–318. If Cotton compiled the codex, then *Maldon's* relevance to its companion pieces may be a seventeenth-century affair. A.N.Doane notes that Otho A xii was in the possession of Lord Lumley before Cotton owned it, as attested by Thomas James, Bodley's librarian. It may have come to Cotton in the form recorded by the cataloguer, Thomas Smith, in his *Catalogus librorum bibliothecae Cottonianae* (1696). Smith is not an entirely reliable source—he failed to mention *Beowulf* in Vitellius A xv, for example. Nevertheless, he lists the contents of Otho A xii as "(1) Asser's *Life* of King Alfred, 'characterē antiquo'; (2) 'Exorcismus superstitionis adversus febres, Latine, praemissis & intermixtis Saxonibus'; (3) *Maldon* ('Fragmentum quoddam Historicum de Eadrico, &c'); 'Vita & Passio S.Ælphēgi, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis & martyris, per Osbernum, Monachum Cantuariensem'; (5) *Translatio S.Ælphēgi*'; (6) 'Vita S. Odonis, Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, per Osbernum, Monachum Cantuariensem,'" Doane, p. 49.
15. Scragg, *Maldon*, 991, pp. 2–14. Hearne's notes are legible in the photograph, p. 3. It is clear from the notes that they were made after Hearne printed the transcript: "I have printed this fragment in the Appendix to John of Glastonbury."
16. Frank, "Reception," pp. 244–45.
17. Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, 15th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), pp. 116–26.
18. A thorough bibliography of editions, translations, and secondary works is available at <<http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/rawl/maldon/index.html>>.
19. John Josias Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. William Daniel Conybeare (1826; New York: Haskell House, 1964), p. lxxxviii. This heroism has been considered the strength of Anglo-Saxon poetry since at least Hippolyte Taine, *History of English Literature*, tr. H.van Laun (1863; Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1873), p. 59, who calls the Anglo-Saxons "brave hearts, simple and strong, faithful to their relatives, to their master in arms, firm and steadfast to enemies and friends, abounding in courage, and ready for sacrifice." A critical sentiment which finds the heroism expressed in Anglo-Saxon poetry to be its most remarkable quality is evident in the work of Frederick Metcalfe (1880), John Earle (1884), Gustav Körting (1887), Stopford A.Brooke (1898), Alois Brandl (1901), and Levin Schücking (1927); see Daniel G.Calder, "Histories and Surveys of Old English Literature: A Chronological Review," *Anglo-Saxon England* 10 (1982):201–44. George K.Anderson calls *Maldon* a folk-epic, "the characteristic expression of a people in the hero-worshipping stage of their tribal civilization," *The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons* (Princeton University Press, 1945), p. 45 and p. 59. C.L.Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), p. 74, thought this "Germanic heroic spirit" was the natural expression of an Anglo-Saxon ethos. Caie, "Heroic Verse," p. 80, warns against an unexamined application of poetic evidence: "Much of our concept of heroic society comes...from a literary genre which is aristocratic and which presents an idealised code of behaviour and life-style."
20. Edward B.Irving, Jr., "The Heroic Style in *The Battle of Maldon*" *Studies in Philology* 58 (1961):458.

21. Scragg, "Fact or Fiction?" p. 22. See also J.E.Cross, "Mainly on Philology and the Interpretative Criticism of *Maldon*," in Robert Burlin and Edward B. Irving, Jr., eds., *Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope* (Toronto University Press, 1974), p. 240: "The poet has selected from, elaborated on, and presumably omitted from a knowledge (not necessarily detailed) of the real events to suit his own purpose as distinguished in the poem." A more literary approach dates from the work of Dame Bertha Phillpots, "*The Battle of Maldon*: Some Danish Affinities," *Modern Language Review* 24 (1929): 172–90, and includes Jess Bessinger (see above) and N.F.Blake; see George R. Petty, Jr. and Susan Petty, "Geology and the Battle of Maldon," *Speculum* 51 (1976):435–446, p. 435. They say that Northey Isle has become a "roadside shrine for Anglo-Saxonists" (p. 436).
22. Scragg, "Fact or Fiction?" pp. 26–27; J.McKinnell, "On the Date of *The Battle of Maldon*," *Medium Ævum* 44 (1975):121–36; C. Clark, "On Dating *The Battle of Maldon*: Certain Evidence Reviewed," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 27 (1983):1–22. The comparison with Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi* is also made by Edward I.Condren, "From Politics to Poetry: Ambivalent Ethics in *The Battle of Maldon*," *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994 for 1991):53–66, 63.
23. Scragg, "Fact or Fiction?" p. 28. Scragg does not discuss Hearne's spelling of Byrhtnoth, "Beorhtnoth," in the margins of the Casley transcript which inexplicably reproduces an earlier form. Hearne's note may suggest that Casley standardized the name as he transcribed the poem, while Hearne copied out a variant.
24. Ottar Grønvik, for example, accounts for young, middle-aged, and older speakers in his reconstruction of Old Norse phonology from runic evidence; see his *Untersuchungen zur älteren nordischen und germanischen Sprachgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998). My thanks to Professor James Cathey for this reference.
25. See Richard M.Hogg, *A Grammar of Old English. Volume One: Phonology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) §§ 5.113–5.118.
26. See Elisabeth S.Sklar, "*The Battle of Maldon* and Popular Tradition: Some Rhymed Formulas," *Philological Quarterly* 54 (1974):409–18.
27. Scragg, "Fact or Fiction?" p. 31. Similarly for John Niles, the meaning of *Maldon* might best be summed up in the sentence, "What a gentleman wants is to suffer poignantly in a noble cause," John Niles, "Maldon and Mythopoesis," *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994 for 1991):89–121, 111. But in an age which saw constant battling against vikings, neither Scragg nor Niles explains why this message ought to be confined specifically to its relevance circa 991, and not later.
28. The dating of the *Sermo* is by Dorothy Betherum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 6. Dorothy Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1966), p.1, cautiously dates it to the late tenth century. Both Whitelock and Betherum think Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 419 and Bodley 343 are probably earlier, but there is evidence that I was edited in Wulfstan's own hand.
29. Conybeare, *Illustrations*, p. lxxxvii.
30. Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society* (London: Penguin, 1952), pp. 34–36. Michael D.Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ: Heroic Concepts and Values in Old English Christian Poetry* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), p. 11. Stanley B.Greenfield and Daniel G.Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York University Press, 1986), p. 150. Kevin CrossleyHolland, *The Anglo-*

- Saxon World* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1982), p. 4. Earl Anderson, "The Roman Idea of a *comitatus* and its Application to *The Battle of Maldon*," *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994 for 1991):15–26, 15. Condren, "Ambivalent Ethics," 61. Simon Keynes, "The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon," in Scragg, *Maldon* 991, pp. 81–113. A brief overview of the criticism is provided by Caie, "Shorter Heroic Verse," pp. 88–93.
31. Niles, "Mythopoesis" p. 92. Scragg objects to this line of argument out of hand, "Fact or Fiction?" p. 27.
 32. Simon Keynes, "Context," p. 91. This argument has been revisited by John Edward Damon, "Advisors for Peace in the Reign of Æthelred the Unræd," in *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies for Coexistence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Diane Wolfthal (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 57–78. Damon argues that Sigeric's policy aimed at converting the Danes, and thereby at a negotiated peace.
 33. S.A.J. Bradley, ed. and trans. *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: J.M. Dent, 1982), p. 519; discussed by Caie, "Shorter Heroic Verse," p. 92.
 34. John M. Hill, "Transcendental Loyalty in *The Battle of Maldon*," *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994 for 1991):67–88, p. 68.
 35. A.N. Doane, "Legend, History and Artifice in The Battle of Maldon," *Viator* 9 (1978): 39–66, 43.
 36. Morton W. Bloomfield, "Patristics and Old English Literature: Notes on Some Poems," in Greenfield, *Studies*, pp. 36–43, p. 36; Bernard Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1959); and Scragg, "Fact or Fiction?" p. 25. But see Caie, "Shorter Heroic Verse," p. 89. Helmut Gneuss virtually ended debate on the meaning of *ofermod* in his "The Battle of Maldon 89: Byrthno's *Ofermod* Once Again," *Studies in Philology* 73 (1976):117–37.
 37. Wormald, "Engla Lond," 15.
 38. Doane, "Legend," 48.
 39. The Old English text is from R.M. Liuzza, ed., *The Old English Version of the Gospels*, EETS 304, p. 34; translation from *The Jerusalem Bible*. The Latin is "multi pati," or endure a great deal. For the instances of the term in Old English, I have consulted the *Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, THO 15, pp. 69–73. "polian" is used mostly in homiletic contexts, and the Scriptural use is sparse.
 40. The Old English version is from Sweet's edition, p. 90., ll. 118–23; the translation is by Michael Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London: J.M. Dent, 1993), p. 182.
 41. *Etymologiae*, ed. Lindsay. Book 18.2, "De Triumphis." Mary P. Richards, "The Battle of Maldon in Its Manuscript Context," in *Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (NY: Garland, 1994), pp. 173–84, at p. 175.
 43. Lapidge, "The *Life of St Oswald*" in Scragg, *Maldon*, 991, pp. 51–58, p. 55. This recalls Jeremiah 4.
 44. Lapidge, *Life*, p. 54; Lapidge's translation, p. 55.
 45. Lapidge, *Life*, p. 56.
 46. Allen H. Godbey, *The Lost Tribes a Myth: Suggestions towards Rewriting Hebrew History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1930), p. 675.
 47. Godbey, *Lost Tribes*, p. 666. For the triumph of Cyrus and the restoration of the Temple, see Ezra; the Old English version is given by Janet Bately, ed. *The Old English Orosius*, EETS ss. 6 (1980), pp. 32–34.

48. Translation by S.A.J. Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: J.M. Dent, 1982), p.59.
49. Paul Szarmach, "The (Sub-) Genre of *The Battle of Maldon*" in Cooper, *Maldon*, pp. 43–61, p. 44. I am wary of this genre simply because it is an admixture of categories which probably would not have been employed to designate a literary type: "Vikings" is not a religious designation.
50. Keynes, "Context," p. 98.
51. Condren, "Ambivalent Ethics," 56.
52. Scragg, "Fact or Fiction?" p. 29. But see Blake, "Genesis," who argues that the poet composed from the *Life of St Oswald*. The poet may not have drawn directly upon a written source, but, even allowing this, one ought not deny the usefulness of comparisons with written sources. For example, there are a number of interesting tactical parallels between the events at Maldon and at Thermopylae, where nearby the Spartans built fortifications around Heraclea, leaving open only a narrow pass to Thermopylae for defensive reasons; see Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 3.92, p. 205. For an account of the battle and the tactical importance of a confined space to an army with inferior numbers, see Herodotus, *The History*, tr. David Grene (University of Chicago Press, 1987), 7.211–225. My thanks to Marian Niles Walker, who first drew this parallel to my attention.
53. Morton W. Bloomfield, "Beowulf, Byrhtnoth, and the Judgment of God: Trial by Combat in Anglo-Saxon England," *Speculum* 44 (1964):545–59. Bloomfield is ambiguous about this assertion, concluding, "Perhaps the poet feels that Byrhtnoth has no right to call upon God to decide the battle; perhaps not," p. 559. George Clark disagrees with this position, and with mine (personal correspondence).
54. Niles, "Mythopoesis," p. 105. One wonders whether Scripture counts as a traditional narrative, and, if so, whether a reference to Scripture is therefore mythic, but not religious.
55. James Driscoll, "Hebrew Tribes," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New Advent, 1997), available at <<http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/15039a.htm>>.
56. Doane, "Legend," p. 41, n. 7.
57. Byrhtnoth invokes a trinity of divine characteristics in this speech: "Waldend" ("Ruler," 173b), "Metod" ("Fate/Creator," 175a), and "þeoden engla" ("King of Angels," 178b). But his spear wound also might suggest an invocation of Odin, since a spear in the side was in some cases a "ceremonial stigmata" to permit entry into Valhalla; see Christopher Fee, *Gods, Heroes, & Kings* (Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 20.
58. Translation from Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 451–52.
59. See T.A. Shippey and Andreas Haarder, *Beowulf: the Critical Heritage* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 24–26. Appropriately, Grudtvig wrote that "it is impossible to estimate the value of one such single point to hold on to in the rolling waves of ancient legend" (p. 24).
60. Earl Anderson, "The Battle of Maldon: A Reappraisal of Possible Sources, Date, and Theme," in Phyllis Rugg Brown, Georgia Ronan Crampton and Fred C. Robinson, eds., *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature: Essays in Honour of Stanley B. Greenfield* (Toronto University Press, 1986), pp. 247–72; p. 267. See also John McN. Dodgson, "The Site of the Battle of Maldon" in Scragg, *Maldon* 991, pp. 170–79.

61. For a reconstruction of the tidal activity at the proposed site of the battle, see <<http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/rawl/maldon/tide/index.html>>. The site contains a picture from a recent reenactment of the battle.
62. For an example of a typological reading of a historical event, see my discussion of Orosius with respect to Caesar's elevation on the date Christians celebrate Epiphany. I am indebted to members of ANSAX, who kindly prompted me to examine the particulars of my hypothesis. In the end, I applied Occam's razor, believing poetic license to be the simplest explanation for the many inconsistencies of the poem's portrait of events.
63. I base these observations on a geological reconstruction of the site which was effected through core samples of the river bed and surrounding saltings by George and Susan Petty, "A Geological Reconstruction of the Site of the Battle of Maldon," in Cooper, *Maldon*, pp. 159–69.
64. Petty and Petty seem to assume the vikings came in superior numbers, "Reconstruction," p. 168. So does Cyril Hart, *The Danelaw* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), p. 537.
65. Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 534.
66. E.D.Laborde, "The Site of the Battle of Maldon," *The English Historical Review* 48 (1925):161–73, 164–65. Two other islands nearby Northey are connected to the mainland at ebb tide: Osea Island and Mersea Island. Although not discussed by Laborde, both were rejected by Petty and Petty, "Reconstruction," p. 167, Osea since it was too far from shore, and Mersea because it was "probably attached by a salt marsh to the land in 991."
67. See Petty and Petty's reconstructed cross-section of the causeway and shoreline, p. 162.
68. Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 534 and p. 435. But this raises the same objections as above.
69. The distance between the two banks has been set at approximately 120 yards. See Petty and Petty, "Reconstruction," p. 168. Some reconstructions have put the distance closer to 200 yards, nearly the 220 yards reckoned by the 1922 Ordinance Survey. See Petty and Petty, "Geology," p. 439.
70. See <<http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/rawl/maldon/tide/index.html>>. The causeway is exposed in late summer until early evening, after which point it is submerged. The events of the poem seem then to require that the armies stood opposite one another through the night awaiting morning ebb tide.
71. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), p. 169, notes that a nineteenth-century English explorer, Major Palmer, described a similar event in nearby Lake Sirbonis: "Strong northeasterly gales, on reaching Suez, would, by its action on an ebb tide, make it abnormally low, and prevent while it lasted, at least for a time, the return of the usual flood tide. In this way a good passage across the channel might soon be laid bare and remain so for several hours. In the morning, a shift of wind to the south...takes place. The pent-up flood tide, now freed from restraint, and urged on by the south gale, returns to its wonted flow." The prevailing supposition is that the Israelites crossed such a flat, and the Egyptians, their men and equipment caught in the mud, were destroyed by the onrushing tide.
72. S.J.Crawford, ed., *The Old English Version of The Heptateuch*, EETS o.s. 160, p. 250. See Exodus 14:21–22.
73. Howe, *Mythmaking*, p. 85.

74. The Mercian Hymn, "Canticum Abaccu pro Sexta Feria" is recorded in Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, pp. 186–89; quote from p. 187. A formulaic echo of Byrhtnoth's "folc and foldan" (l. 54a) in Riddle 7, "flode ond foldan" (l. 9a), also recalls the importance of the water image to this poem. For Scriptural parallels, see 1 Enoch 67:5–7, Romans 10:7, Psalm 77:16, 1 Peter 3:19–21; see also the OE *Andreas*, ll. 1585–1600. A helpful introduction to the image is given by David Lyle Jeffrey, ed., *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1992), s.v.
75. Howe, *Mythmaking*, p. 87.
76. Wulfstan, *De Septiformi Spiritu* in Dorothy Betherum, ed., *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 185–91, p. 190, lines 128–29.
77. Wulfstan, *Be Godcundre Warnunge* in Betherum, *Wulfstan*, pp. 251–54; *gerymad* is misprinted in the edition on p. 253, line 67, as *geyrmad*.
78. George Philip Krapp, ed. *The Junius Manuscript* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. xxviii. Notably, the Exodus crossing in the Pentateuch is related twice, once in prose (Exodus 14) and once in poetry (Exodus 15).
79. I am indebted to George Clark's explanation of *ofermod* in light of Hans Schabram's *Superbia* (Munich, 1965) as an "illicit aspiration to a higher place or grudging discontent at a lower one." See Clark, "The Hero of Maldon: Vir Pius et Strenuus," *Speculum* 54 (1979):257–82, 280. See also Scragg above.
80. Martin Irvine, "Medieval Textuality and the Archaeology of Textual Culture," in Allen Frantzen, ed., *Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 181–210, p. 208 and p. 202.

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